Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1992 ISSUE #38
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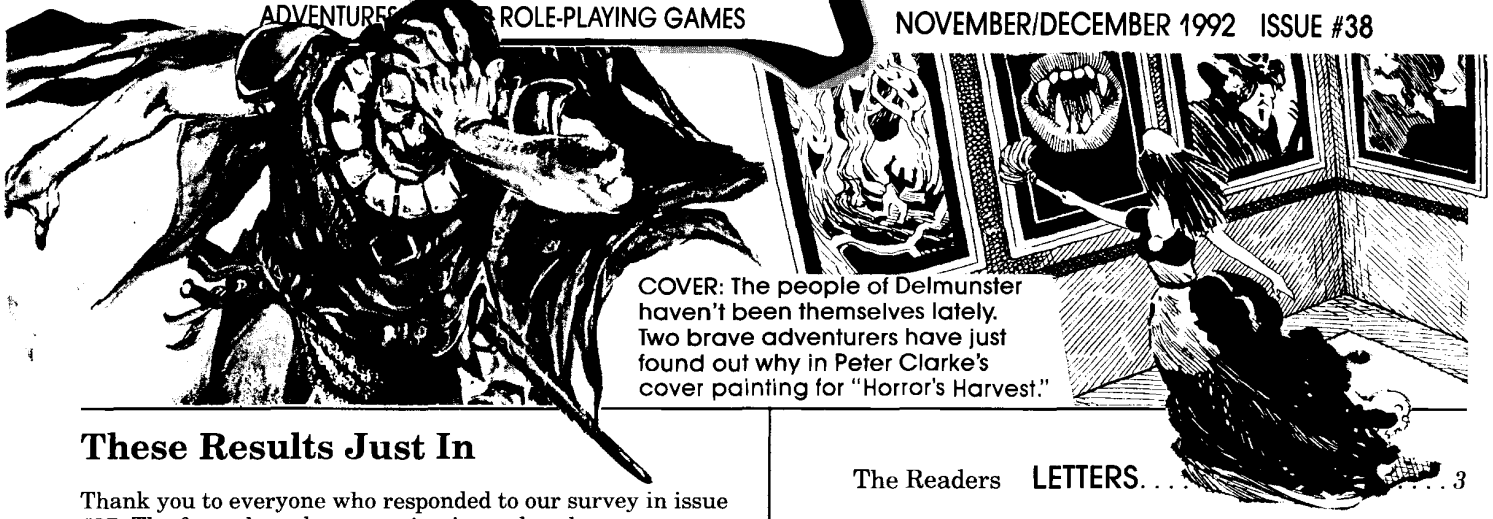

COVER: The people of Delmunster haven't been themselves lately. Two brave adventurers have just found out why in Peter Clarke's cover painting for "Horror's Harvest."

These Results Just In

Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey in issue #37. The forms have been pouring in, and we have some completely unofficial results from the first 200 surveys. Clearly, more than half our audience is 23 and older. Also, almost everyone wants us to go monthly if we can keep the quality of the adventures up.

A number of people complained about the posters and trading cards, and most of you want player maps, props, handouts, and other adventure-related goodies. We hope to have them for you soon, but we can only provide them if our authors write adventures that can make use of them (hint, hint). A reprint of the *deck of many things* from issue #19 was requested by a number of people; sorry, it will not be reprinted. Those few souls who asked that miniatures be included as goodies are also going to be disappointed.

Most of you want to see AD&D®, FORGOTTEN REALMS®, and GREYHAWK® setting adventures. The AL-QADIM™ setting got a surprisingly strong response from readers; a third of you said you wanted to see Arabian adventures in some issues, and another third wouldn't mind seeing them occasionally. That's a much more favorable response than African, Oriental, or Maztica adventure settings got. Vikings were more popular; about half of you would like to see them some of the time, and a sixth never want to see Vikings in these pages. The Norsemen will be here next issue, so get ready.

You've asked us to continue to give you a variety of adventure themes and levels, with one exception. Few readers want to see adventures based on the AD&D® game's optional psionics rules. We will restrict our psionics adventures to the DARK SUN™ setting.

We'll have complete and official results for you soon.

Wolfgang Baur

Vol. VII, No. 2

PUBLISHER: James M. Ward
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Few men have imagination enough for the truth of reality.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

LETTERS

The first two letters below arrived on the same day. To be fair, we've listed only the letter-writers' initials.

Sour Grapes?

I just read Barbara's whining request that we, the subscribers, should respond more. I just have a few brief things to say about her column. For one thing, I don't think that you should assume that because your new product sales are brisk, we want those types of modules in DUNGEON® Magazine.

You won't admit it, but the real reason that you fill the magazine with "new game" modules is that you are promoting your own products. It's also the reason why you are receiving the same kinds of submissions from your subscribers, for after being rejected for submitting good AD&D® (or D&D®) game modules, they have turned to what will get printed. I guess that it is all right to practice this, even though I disagree with it strongly, yet I am insulted to hear it is because we the masses wish it. I hope that the majority of the readers will fill out your survey, and not just the special interest groups who usually do.

Lastly, you're quite right that we have little time to sit down and type up a letter, and even more so we have even less time to draw up a flawless module just to be rejected on no sound basis whatsoever!

F. C.
No address given

Rats! The secret is out! DUNGEON Adventures is actually part of a major role-playing game publisher and has an interest in supporting the product lines of its parent company. Are we naive in thinking that if we sell 20-30,000 copies of a boxed set (such as the AD&D SPELLJAMMER® or RAVENLOFT® rules supplements), that the people who purchased these products would like a few additional adventures to play with them? Where there seems to be no great interest, we have not forced adventures down our readers' throats (witness no Maztica, Horde, or Undermountain modules).

Are They Talking About the Same Magazine?

I would like to thank Mr. Wolfgang Baur for his letter in response to my first proposal for a module. Although I was disappointed that your publication was not interested in my adventure, I was encouraged by his suggestions for my "next proposal." It is very common, I suppose, to send material to a publisher and have it flatly rejected. It is uncommon for a publisher to offer helpful suggestions and hints with the rejection. In a very real way, this type of positive motivation to fledgling authors such as myself serves to perpetuate the respect I've had for TSR over the years. I find myself slightly annoyed with letters that seem to imply that TSR is some well-orchestrated and nepotistic cabal bent on shredding the pages of novice authors because they haven't yet been printed in your publication.

Again, my thanks to Mr. Baur, whose openness and positive attitude reinforced my hope of becoming a published author.

E. D. S.
Hellertown, Pennsylvania

Nobody at TSR is organized enough to form a well-orchestrated cabal.

A New Definition of "Fun"

I enjoy your magazine very much, and I especially enjoyed "Asflag's Unintentional Emporium" in issue #36. Our DUNGEON MASTER™ was prepared to kill any PC who did anything wrong, and he did this quite well.

The PCs were doing fine until they encountered the scarecrows in area 9 and set them all on fire. In doing this, they set the whole garden on fire, and then ran to the ponds to fetch water. They encountered the cifal on the way, and by the time they killed it, the fire was out of control. Several PCs ran into the house to quickly search for treasure, while two PCs ran and fetched the guards to put out the fire.

The two remaining PCs made it onto the roof, where they encountered the eight gargoyles. One PC was struck unconscious, and the other drank a potion of *flying* and tried to fly away. Unfortunately, he soon found out that the gargoyles could fly faster than he could. They caught and killed him.

The building eventually fell in on itself, killing the PC on the roof. Before this happened, however, every single monster that had not been slain earlier abandoned the building and rampaged all over the town, destroying most of it.

The guards arrested the remaining PCs, and they were put away for 50 years. All their magical items were confiscated, and the lawful PCs lost experience.

Although most of the PCs died, the players greatly enjoyed the adventure. Well done, Willie Walsh!

Huw Lockwood
Kingston, Tasmania, Australia

Ω

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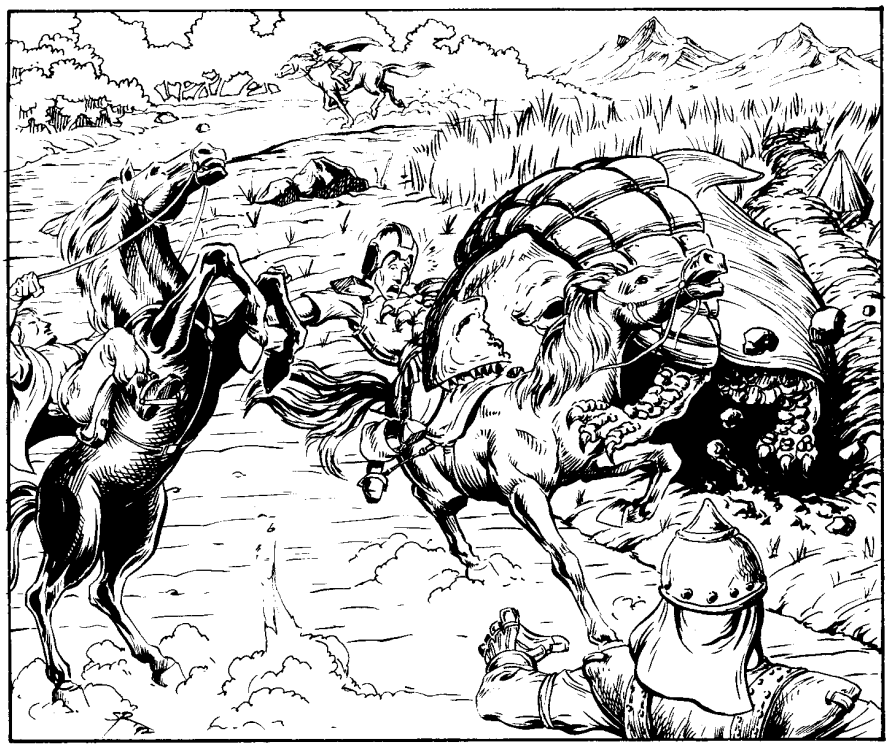


A BLIGHT ON THE LAND

BY RICHARD GREEN

You say you want a revolution?

Artwork by Scott Rosema

Richard graduated from Durham University in 1988 with a BA in Classical Studies. He currently works in a bookstore in central London and has been playing role-playing games for 12 years. He would like to thank Matt and Andy for playtesting, and especially Kate for all her help and encouragement.

This AD&D® adventure is intended for four to six player characters of 8th-12th level (about 50 total levels). A party of well-equipped adventurers, including a wizard and at least two warriors, is recommended; a ranger or any character with the tracking proficiency would be useful.

The scenario takes place in Tethyr in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® fantasy setting, shortly after the Time of Troubles (detailed in the Avatar trilogy of novels and adventures). The sourcebook FR3 *Empires of the Sands* will prove useful in supplying background information to the players but is not essential.

DMs not using the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign set can adapt the adventure to their own worlds with a little work. The module requires two rival cities, one of which is located in an agricultural region that has recently been affected by a large-scale natural or supernatural disaster (for example, an earthquake). The DM™ can substitute his own evil organization for the Knights of the Shield that appear in this adventure.

Adventure Background

As the adventure begins, the PCs are resting between jobs in the city of Zazesspur, located on the Sword Coast just south of the Starspire Peninsula. Zazesspur is the largest city in Tethyr. It is a major port, and its location on the Trade Way increases its importance as a center of commerce. While the open land southeast of the city is too dry for crops, the Purple Hills to the south are highly fertile, providing the city with much of its food. In addition, the town's craftsmen and artisans are renowned throughout the Sword Coast. In particular, Zazesspur-made clothing is much sought after in many other cities.

Politically, Zazesspur is one of four influential cities that once belonged to the nation of Tethyr, the other cities being Ithmong, Saradush, and Myratma. For 1,500 years, Tethyr was ruled by a series of strong royal families.

However, 10 years ago this situation changed. King Alemander IV's rule led to dissatisfaction among the people: nonhumans were denied rights afforded to their human brethren, and land was taken away from its rightful owners and handed to those whom the king favored. Prince Alemander, the king's heir, grew tired of waiting for his father to die and struck a deal with an ambitious general to seize control of the kingdom. The revolution succeeded, but the two conspirators betrayed one another and both perished. With the fall of House Tethyr, the disaffected citizens rose up and Castle Tethyr fell—and chaos followed. During the "Ten Black Days of Eleint," anyone connected with the royal family was put to the sword. "Royalist" became a dirty word.

Now Tethyr is a collection of independent city states, much like those found in the North. Most, like Zazesspur, are governed by a council, and some, such as Ithmong, are effectively ruled by one man. Among the governors of these city states are some who dream of seizing control of the whole of Tethyr. Many nobles fled to Zazesspur during the revolution, and an underground movement to reestablish the royal family is growing there. A larger group is promoting the idea of a return to monarchy but with a different king, unconnected to the ruling family of the past.

It is now a month after the Time of Troubles, when the Forgotten Realms were ravaged by physical chaos as the gods walked the earth. Dead magic regions sprang up, trees uprooted themselves, and areas of land were dramatically altered. With the Godswar over, the land has by and large returned to normal.

This has not happened in the farming region around the city of Ithmong in Tethyr, though. During the crisis, the region was badly affected by physical chaos, resulting in the destruction of much of the crops. Physical chaos still prevails in the area, and the situation is worsened by monsters at large along the Ithal road and the River Ith. The monsters are interfering with trade between Ithmong and other cities. Food supplies from other regions are not getting in as winter approaches. Ernest Gallowglass, the mayor of Ithmong, has imposed food rationing and is on the verge of introducing martial law as the starving populace takes to the streets. The threat of riots has prevented him from dealing with the problems afflicting the countryside, and the situation in Ithmong is becoming more explosive every day.

All of this is a matter of great concern to the Company of Eight, a band of Tethyrian adventurers (detailed in FR3 *Empires of the Sands*, pages 45-47, and FR7 *Hall of Heroes,* pages 119-128). This group is dedicated to the ideals of peace, freedom, and justice in troubled Tethyr. Their past exploits include ridding the Trade Way of a troublesome green dragon, and organizing the forces that deposed the tyrant who ruled Ithmong. Gallowglass has been kept under close watch as the Company has come to believe (quite rightly) that he too has despotic ambitions.

The Company does not want to see Ithmong's citizens starve, but since the Time of Troubles has left a great many problems in its wake, the group has had to spread itself very thin. Therefore, the Company has decided to employ some outside help, which is where the PCs come in.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

The chaos around Ithmong is not merely a legacy of the Time of Troubles. The Knights of the Shield (detailed in *Cyclopedia of the Realms,* page 55) is a secretive group of evil individuals dedicated to influencing the politics of the Sword Coast to their own advantage. The ultimate aims, power, and activities of this group are unknown, but it is rumored that the Knights of the Shield are affiliated with (or perhaps led by) an archfiend from the Nine Hells. The Lords of Waterdeep are known to have frustrated the Knights' plans to infiltrate their number. Now, the group has turned its attention to Tethyr, where the pro-monarchy movement in Zazesspur offers a situation ripe for exploitation.

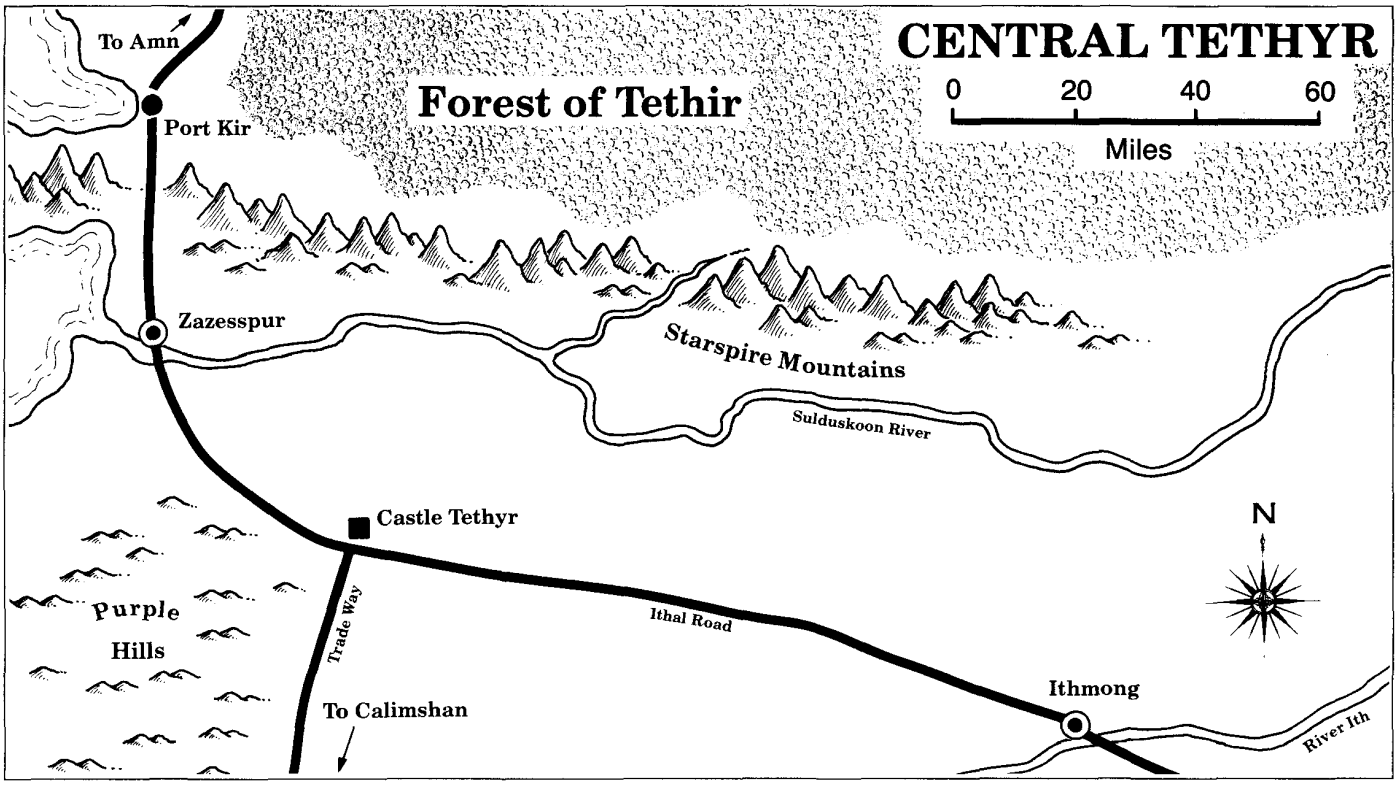
Lord Hhune, a powerful member of the Zazesspur town council, is one of the leaders of the Knights. Through his skills as a public speaker, Hhune intends to gain enough popular support to have himself proclaimed "Crown Prince of Zazesspur." From this position, he plans to go on to become king of Tethyr. For Hhune's plan to work, Ernest Gallowglass, who has similar ambitions, must be taken out of the running.

The Knights have sent a group of wizards led by a key agent named Minshak Keseri to the Ithmong region. These mages have established themselves in an abandoned manor house and are using their magic to bring monsters into the area and to render the land unfarmable. By cutting off the city, the Knights hope Ithmong will be sufficiently weakened that its citizens will force Gallowglass out, allowing Hhune to step in as the city's savior, disposing of the monsters and bringing the people much-needed food supplies. At this point he will invite the people of Ithmong to join the New Kingdom of Tethyr. With Ithmong and Zazesspur united under his rule, Hhune believes the other cities of Tethyr will have little choice but to join his kingdom.

Player Character Introduction

Read or paraphrase the following to the players as their characters try to relax in a local tavern:

> You have been in Zazesspur for a few days now, and you are getting bored. It's not as if there is nothing to do here. There are plenty of fine taverns and restaurants to drink and eat in, and just last night the Fabulous Fellini Brothers Circus was in town. No, it's the citizens and their obsession with politics. Whichever street you walk down, you are harangued by people standing on crates and barrels calling for a return to monarchy. You can't even enjoy a drink in peace without someone coming up to you and attempting to persuade you that this or that person would make a fantastic king.
>
> It's hard to remember that Zazesspur was once part of Tethyr—the kingdom whose people overthrew their royal family in a bloody revolution 10 years ago. Now things appear to have come full circle, with the popular Lord Hhune talked about all over the city as the man to "put Zazesspur back on its feet." There's only one thing to do—it's time to get back on the open road.
>
> As you look up from your drink, you see two people—an elf and a halfling—approaching your table. Getting ready to throw your ale at them if the words "monarchy" or "king" are mentioned, you are greatly relieved when the elf asks "Are you adventurers?"



The two strangers are Sylvanus Moondrop and Paddy Stoutfellow of the Company of Eight, who are in town keeping an eye on the growing royalist movement. With the other members of their group spread throughout Tethyr, the pair are eager to recruit a band of adventurers to investigate the situation in Ithmong.

Sylvanus Moondrop (wood elf): AL N; AC 0; MV 12; F6; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 1 (2/1 with specialization); Dmg by weapon type (specialized with long bow); S 15, D 17, C 14, I 13, W 13, Ch 16; ML 15; splint mail, large shield, *long bow +2, long sword +1, boots of speed,* eight *arrows +2,* two *arrows +4,* potion of *fire giant strength, stone of good luck, ring of regeneration.*

Sylvanus Moondrop, a wood elf of the Elmanesse tribe, has been a member of the Company of Eight for six years. Prior to joining, he adventured in Tethyr and northern Calimshan. Unusually gregarious for a wild elf, he likes meeting new people and, of his companions, finds Paddy's company the most enjoyable. Although somewhat ambivalent on most political issues, he is both vocal and unyielding in his opposition to a united Tethyr. Rather, he would prefer to see a loose alliance between the various city states, including the elves of the Forest of Tethyr and the halflings of the Purple Hills.

Sylvanus is tall and slender, with red hair, coppery skin, and bright green eyes.

Paddy Stoutfellow (halfling): AL NG; AC 4; MV 12; F6/T6; hp 44; THAC0 15; #AT 1 (3/2 with specialization); Dmg by weapon type (specialized with broad sword); S 11, D 15, C 16, I 10, W 14, Ch 8; ML 14. Thief abilities: PP 40%, OL 47%, FT 45%, MS 47%, HS 42%, HN 20%, CW 57%, RL 25%, backstab (+4 to hit for triple damage); elven chain mail, *broad sword +2 green dragon slayer,* five *bolts +1,* five *bolts +2,* five *bolts +3,* light crossbow.

Paddy is the clown of the Company of Eight, forever pointing out to them that they take themselves too seriously. Paddy gets on best with Sylvanus, the group's only other nonhuman. Though lighthearted, Paddy is intensely loyal to the Company. They are his friends, and friends are what he values most. He joined the Company for adventure and is not very politically aware. As long as Tethyr is stable and prosperous, and his friends in the Purple Hills get a share of whatever's going, he will be happy.

Paddy has black hair and bushy sideburns; he enjoys a drink and games of chance, often stealing something difficult for a bet.

Sylvanus and Paddy explain the situation in Ithmong to the PCs, answering any questions they might have. They know all the information given in the "Adventure Background." The pair would like the party to travel to the Ithmong area and attempt to discover the source of the monster problem. Both Sylvanus and Paddy consider it very strange that this part of Tethyr should remain so heavily disrupted when the rest of the region has returned to normal.

The PCs should attempt to put a stop to the monsters' depredations so that food supplies can be got to the people of Ithmong. Sylvanus will recommend that they begin at the village of Lerren, where Dolgan, the village elder, will be able to give them more specific information about the monsters and the locality. The Company will supply the party with a map of the area (the DM™ should give the players a rough copy of the

Ithmong Area map with only the villages, road, and river indicated).

The Company of Eight is not rich, but recent adventures have put them in a position to offer the PCs a reward of 5,000 gp. If the DM feels this is too much or too little, the amount can be raised or lowered. In addition, the Company has numerous friends and allies throughout Tethyr and may be able to provide nonfinancial help to the group in the future.

The Journey

Ithmong is 250 miles from Zazesspur, so it will take the PCs between one and two weeks to reach the trouble spot, depending on their mode of transport. The party will encounter merchants on the stretch of the Trade Way between Zazesspur and Castle Tethyr, but none on the Ithal road itself. The activities of the monsters have caused those merchants who normally carry wares to and from Ithmong to switch their destinations to Myratma and Calimshan beyond.

It is recommended that the DM allow the party to reach the Ithmong area without being plagued by monster attacks. This may give the players a hint that something is drawing all of Tethyr's monsters to Ithmong. If the DM wants to run an encounter with a merchant, a typical traveling salesman is detailed below:

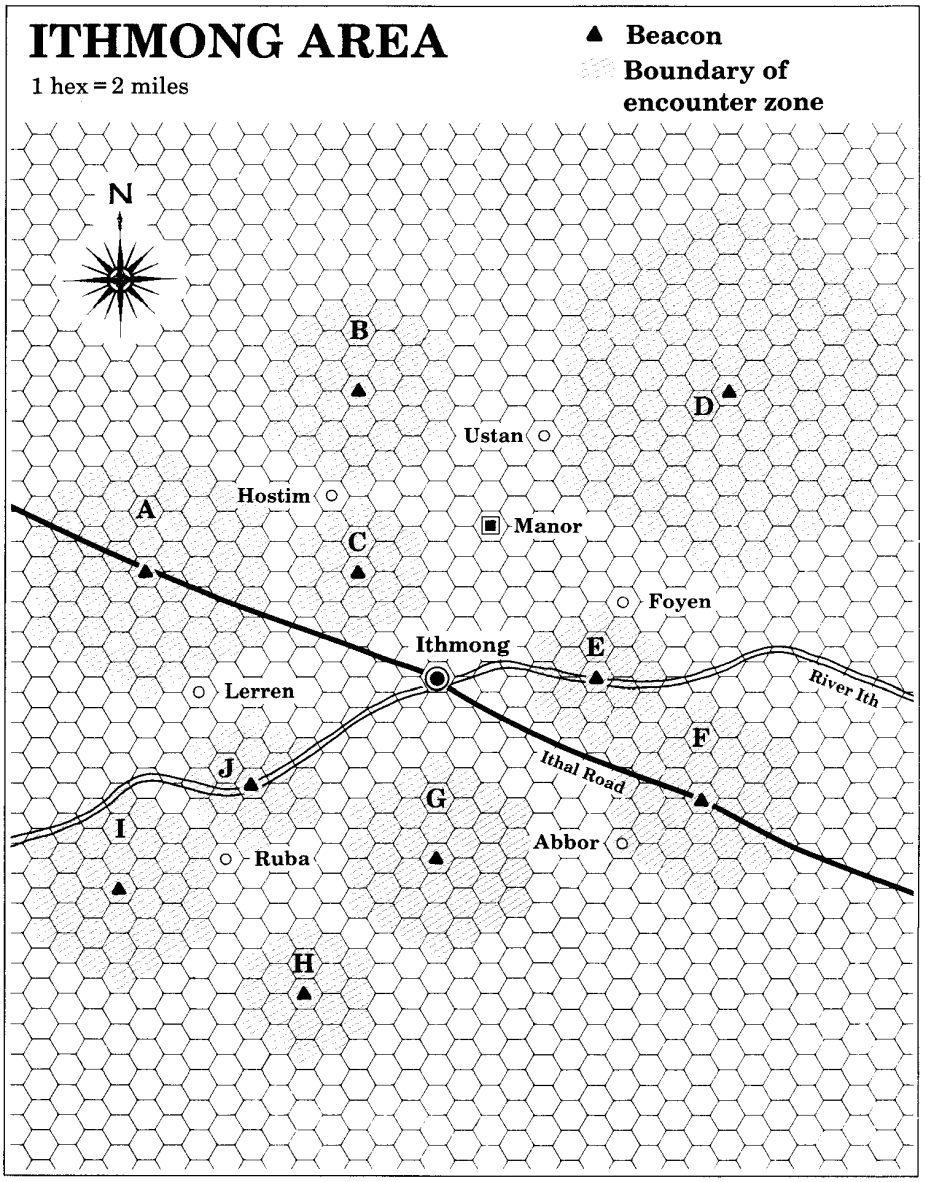
Zarack Shool, human merchant: AL N; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 10, I 13, W 13, Ch 15; ML 10; long sword, 152 gp.

Zarack is one of the merchants who changed his destination from Ithmong to Myratma, after he lost a load of dyed silk to a bulette that smashed up through the road beneath his wagon. The land shark managed to eat several of the guards before submerging again, leaving the merchant badly shaken.

That was several weeks ago. Now Zarack has opted for the safer Trade Way, where he has only bandits to worry about. Zarack is accompanied by 12 mounted guards and is transporting a wagonload of raw silk (worth 5,000 gp) from Myratma for sale to dyers and tailors in Zazesspur.

Guards (12): AL N; AC 5; MV 9 (24 mounted); F2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; scale mail, shield, long sword, spear.

Light Warhorses (12): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 2-16; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; SZ L; ML 10; XP 35; MC1 (horse).



Around Ithmong

Local agents of the Knights of the Shield are using two different methods to bring monsters into the area. Firstly, they have buried 10 magical devices known as Thayvian beacons (see sidebar) within 30 miles of Ithmong. Each beacon sends out a powerful signal to a specific type of monster within the item's range, drawing such monsters into an area and then magically holding them within it. Secondly, the wizards have been using spells to summon elementals and lesser baatezu to ravage those areas of land not covered by the beacons. The monsters prey on the farmers' cattle, destroy root crops, and serve as a barricade around the city, preventing food supplies getting through.

The terrain in the Ithmong area is of two basic types. North of the Ithal road and the river, the land is grassy with only the occasional tree to provide cover. South of the road, the villagers of Ler-

Thayvian Beacon

A Thayvian beacon is a magical device that attracts a specific type of monster into an area and then holds it there through a powerful form of mind control. These beacons were developed by the School of Conjuration and Summoning in Thay, originally for use in Rashemen. Minshak Keseri was an influential member of the School at this time and was partly responsible for the item's invention.

To create a Thayvian beacon, the wizard first needs to acquire a piece of the monster to be attracted (a tooth, for example). Next, a skilled metalsmith is required to cast a bronze disk 1′ in diameter and 3″ thick. The likeness of the monster should be carved into the mold, so that a relief picture of the beast appears on the disk. The piece of the monster must be ground or crushed into the molten bronze.

When the disk has been removed from the mold and has cooled, the wizard can begin his work. The exact spells to be cast are known only to select Red Wizards of the School of Conjuration and Summoning, but Elminster of Shadowdale believes they include *enchant an item, permanency,* and *charm monster,* as well as *monster summoning* spells whose potency level must total the hit dice of the monster to be summoned. In other words, to enchant a beacon to attract bulettes, the wizard needs to cast *monster summoning VII* and *monster summoning II* (or a similar combination), as a bulette is a 9-HD monster.

Each beacon must have its own unique command words both to activate and deactivate it. Monsters that can be attracted by Thayvian beacons must be of low intelligence or less. The range of a device is 10 miles per hit die of the monster to be summoned. Once attracted to the beacon, a powerful *charm* affects the monster. The creature must make an intelligence check or it cannot stray farther than one mile per hit die from the beacon. For each week within the zone of a beacon, the monster can check again, adding +1 to its intelligence check per week trapped. If it cannot overcome the beacon's influence, the monster will remain within the zone of effect, even if this means it starves to death.

ren, Ruba, and Abbor have divided the land into fields that are separated by fences and tall hedges that provide good cover from which the monsters can set up ambushes.

When the PCs get within 30 miles of Ithmong, they are likely to encounter some of the monsters. For each hour spent in the zone of a beacon, there is a 10% chance to encounter monsters of a particular type. Outside these zones, check for random encounters every four hours, rolling 1d10. A roll of 1 indicates an encounter occurs; consult the table below to determine the type of encounter.

Ithmong Area Random Encounters
(Roll 1d8)

1-3: **Villagers** (1-4): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 7.

4-5: **Cattle** (2-20): INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA stampede; SZ L; ML 4; XP 65; MC1 (Animal, herd).

6: **Dead cow** (75%) or **dead villager** (25%).

7: **Osyluth** (1): INT very; AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8/3-12 plus poison (save at −3 or lose 1-4 points of strength for 1-10 rounds); SA spell-like powers (at 12th level of ability); spells always active: *know alignment;* spells usable once per round, one at a time: *advanced illusion, animate dead, charm person, infravision, suggestion, teleport without error, fly, improved phantasmal force, invisibility, wall of ice;* spells usable once per day: *gate* (35% chance of 1-2 osyluths or 50% chance of 1-100 nupperibo); see perfectly in normal darkness; radiate *fear* in 5′ radius; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to fire, poison; half damage from gas and cold attacks; MR 30%; SZ L; ML 12; XP 24,000; MC8 (Baatezu, lesser).

8: **Earth elemental** (1): INT low; AL N; AC 2; MV 6; HD 12; hp 72; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 4-32; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 15; XP 6,000; MC1.

If the PCs think to follow the tracks of either the osyluth or the elemental, they can follow them to the side of the hill on which the wizards' manor is located.

The Villages

The six villages around Ithmong are very similar. Each has a population of between 80 and 100 people living in 12 to 15 simple dwellings. All the land around a village is used by the farmers who live there. North of the River Ith and the Ithal road, the land is used as pasture for herds of cattle; the villagers have lost many beasts to the monsters. Root crops are cultivated around the village of Lerren, but the fields have been badly ravaged by bulettes. South of the river, the villages of Ruba and Abbor grow cereal crops; their harvest was almost completely destroyed by the physical chaos that afflicted the land during the Godswar, and the monsters active in the area now are making it impossible for the farmers to prepare the fields for planting in the spring.

The PCs should start by visiting Lerren as Sylvanus suggested. The villagers are nervous, but the village elder, Dolgan, welcomes the adventurers warmly if they mention Sylvanus or the Company of Eight. Sylvanus helped defend Lerren against a band of ogres a year ago, so Dolgan is eager to repay the favor by aiding the Company's representatives.

Dolgan: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10.

The PCs are offered some food from the village's meager stores (a generous gesture given the circumstances) and accommodation in Dolgan's own cottage. The DM™ should allow the party to hear rumors 1, 5, and 15 to get the PCs started (see the "Village Talk" sidebar).

In the other villages, the inhabitants are naturally wary of strangers during these troubled times. However, if the PCs make clear their friendly intentions, they will be able to engage in conversation.

Villagers: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 7.

In each village, the PCs can learn 1-4 rumors if they question the villagers. The DM can pick from the "Village Talk" list or roll randomly using 1d20.

Ithmong

Four years ago, Ernest Gallowglass, the son of a blacksmith, seized control of the town council of Ithmong—a city until then considered culturally and political-

ly backward—through a combination of bribery and threats. He consolidated his position, and now the city is effectively governed by him alone. Until the present crisis, Gallowglass had the full support of Ithmong's citizens, which was vital to his plans to take over the rest of Tethyr by military might.

Ithmong is the second largest city in Tethyr, controlling all east-west trade through the country. The Ithal road and the River Ith cross at the city, and the bridge in the middle of town provides the only river crossing for hundreds of miles. Ithmong's location in the center of Tethyr's agricultural region is the other reason for its importance. Now, all this has changed. The Knights' monsters have cut off the city, and trade has become nonexistent.

The PCs have little reason to visit the city itself, as the problems of the region are concentrated in the area around it. However, if they do so, they will find members of the city guard on every street corner and angry citizens everywhere. The people are starving. What food there is has become unaffordable, and Gallowglass appears to be doing nothing. If the DM™ wishes, PCs visiting Ithmong can be caught in a riot, as the people seize clubs and staves and attack the soldiers. If the PCs talk to the citizens, most will be suspicious and unfriendly. If the adventurers explain why they are here, they are likely to be met with a surly response such as "Well, why don't you go after those monsters, then, if you're meant to be our saviors?" Whatever happens, the PCs will be unable to learn anything new in Ithmong.

Encounter Zones

There is a finite number of monsters within each zone, as noted below after the creature's name. An encounter within a zone can be with as many monsters as the DM wishes (depending on the party's strength), but no more than the total number in the zone.

A. Bulettes (4): INT animal; AL N; AC −2/4 (eyes)/6 (under crest); MV 14, burrow 3; HD 9; hp 51, 49, 47, 45; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 4-48/3-18/3-18; SA 8′ jump; SZ L; ML 11; XP 4,000; MC2.

These creatures continually wander across the zone, frequently passing the beacon that is buried 100 yards to the north of the Ithal road. The bulettes' activities have disturbed the item, and it now lies on top of the churned earth. There is a 10% chance per PC that the party notices the beacon glinting in the sun as the adventurers pass along the road. As bulettes are solitary creatures, an encounter in this zone will be with a single monster.

B. Trolls (13): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 43 (×2), 42 (×2), 39 (×3), 38 (×3), 36 (×3); THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/5-12; SD regeneration; SZ L; ML 14; XP 1,400; MC1.

While the trolls frequently wander the zone at night looking for prey, during the day they retire to a cave on top of the hill, where the beacon has been

Village Talk

1. The monsters began appearing about a month ago, a week after the Time of Troubles ended. (True)
2. The monsters have been sent by Beshaba, goddess of ill luck, because of the villagers' failure to appease her with offerings. (False)
3. The monsters have been sent by Chauntea, goddess of agriculture, to punish the villagers for their failure to provide her with offerings at harvest time. (False)
4. Ernest Gallowglass is raising an army to drive the monsters away. (False. He is too busy trying to prevent Ithmong's collapse into civil chaos.)
5. Ernest Gallowglass is doing nothing. Unless someone else helps, the villagers are doomed. (True. This is Hhune's plan. When Gallowglass has been ousted, Hhune will get Keseri to call off the monsters and arrive to "drive out" the already departing creatures.)
6. "What I don't understand is that only around the city are the farms suffering like this. Why are all the monsters here?"
7. There are monsters in the river—like trolls but they can breathe underwater. They swarm onto boats and kill those aboard. Now the boats have stopped coming. (True)
8. The trolls living north of Hostim have a lair on top of a hill about six miles from the village. (True. This is the location of a beacon.)
9. Huge metal bulls have attacked villagers from Ruba. It is said two villagers were turned to stone by the breath of one of these monsters. (True)
10. Great men made of earth have been seen both north and south of the river, tearing up the land as they go. (True)
11. The River Ith has come to life. A boat full of merchants trying to escape from Ithmong were killed when the waters rose up and drowned them. (Partly true. This incident was caused by a water elemental that has now returned to the plane of elemental Water.)
12. A dragon has been seen near Abbor. It flew over the village and made off with several goats. (False. The creature was a manticore.)
13. Cattle are being slain by bands of ogres and trolls on both sides of the river. (True)
14. Something is destroying the land to the northeast of Foyen. Cattle have disappeared without a trace, and the ground has been churned up. (True. This is caused by the purple worm that is active in the area.)
15. The potato crops grown by the villagers of Lerren have been destroyed by burrowing monsters. One villager saw a fin sticking up through the ground "like a shark." (True)
16. "I was out trying to round up my cattle when I saw lights over at the old manor. It's very odd, because that place has been deserted since its lord was put to death during the Ten Black Days."
17. Giant insects that spit acid are running amok in the fields between Ruba and Abbor. (True)
18. "About three weeks ago I saw a whole bunch of folks digging up the ground near the Ithal road. They looked like they were up to no good, but there were too many of them. I was scared."
19. "Some monsters have been spotted around here that aren't usual for these parts. I saw one near Foyen. It was more like a skeleton than anything else, and it had a big tail like an insect. It smelled of death. Fortunately it didn't see me."
20. "Perhaps the monsters will go away when the weather gets colder."

hidden. The trolls see the beacon as their most prized possession. At any time, there will be at least six trolls in the cave to guard it. The trolls also possess a small amount of treasure (258 sp and 121 gp) that is scattered around the cave floor.

C. Ogres (15): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 27 (×3), 26 (×3), 25 (×3), 24 (×3), 23 (×3); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SZ L; ML 11; XP 175; MC1; 2-8 gp each.

The ogres move around the zone, hunting those cattle the villagers have failed to round up. Many tracks converge where the beacon is buried a foot underground. Any PC making a tracking roll can tell that the turf here has been dug up and replaced in the last few weeks.

D. Purple worm (1): INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 15; hp 88; THAC0 5; #AT 1 and 1; Dmg 2-24 and 2-20 plus poison; SA swallow whole; SZ G; ML 12; XP 13,000; MC2 (Worm).

The zone's only purple worm travels underground, sensing vibrations above. When the PCs encounter the worm, it bursts out of the ground ahead of them, attempting to swallow as many people as it can. If it takes more than 30 hp damage, it disappears underground again, taking any swallowed PCs with it. The worm's movements have flung the beacon up onto the surface, and a PC passing through the center of the zone has a 10% chance of noticing it.

E. Scrags, freshwater trolls (6): INT low; AL CE; AC 3; MV 3, swim 15; HD 5+5; hp 38, 37, 36, 34, 32 (×2); THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/3-12; SA special; SD regeneration; SZ L; ML 14; XP 650; MC1 (Troll).

The freshwater trolls attracted to this zone have been feeding on the fish in the river but can also be encountered within a mile of the river bank as they hunt for more substantial fare. The River Ith is 150 yards wide and 20′ deep here, with strong currents, so the PCs are unlikely to find the beacon that lies on the river bed.

F. Manticores (4): INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, fly 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 40, 37, 36, 35; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA fire volley of 1-6 tail spikes for 1-6 hp damage (four times per day); SZ H; ML 13; XP 1,400; MC1.

The manticores fly over the area looking for food and have attacked and killed a few villagers from Abbor. After hunting, they rest on a small ridge overlooking the Ithal road, which is where the beacon is buried, again a foot under the ground.

G. Ankhegs (6): INT non; AL N; AC 2/4 (underside); MV 12, burrow 6; HD 8; hp 53, 50, 48, 45, 46, 47; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18 plus 1-4 (acid); SA squirt acid; SZ H; ML 9; XP 1,400; MC2.

These fully grown ankhegs have been tunnelling back and forth across the zone. They spend their time hiding just below the surface, waiting to burst up beneath a victim. Like the bulettes and the purple worm, the ankhegs' burrowing has disturbed the beacon in this zone. However, instead of appearing on the surface, the device has slid down one of the tunnels and is now 20′ below ground level.

H. Ogres (10): hp 24 (×3), 23 (×4), 21 (×3).

These ogres are similar to those in zone C but are having difficulty finding enough food to stay alive. When they attempted to leave the area of the beacon's influence, they found themselves unable to do so. The ogres have dug up the beacon but do not know what they have discovered. They now spend their time sitting around trying to think of a way to escape the region. As they are very stupid, useful ideas are taking a long time to come.

I. Gorgons (4): INT animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 46, 43, 42, 39; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SA breath weapon (petrification); SZ L; ML 9; XP 1,400; MC2.

The gorgons that inhabit this zone have left a number of statues around the area: two or three of villagers and several of livestock. Tracks are numerous near the beacon, again buried 1′ under the ground. A successful tracking roll reveals that someone has recently been digging here. The gorgons are hungry and likely to track PCs who attempt to evade them; the gorgons have a 75% chance of success.

J. Scrags (8): hp 36, 35 (×2), 34 (×2), 33, 32, 29.

The scrags in this zone behave in the same way as those in zone E. The beacon here also lies on the bottom of the river, at the shallower depth of 10′. Alert PCs have a 10% chance of noticing the glint of metal from the banks of the river.

The Manor

The wizard Minshak Keseri and his assistants have taken up residence in an old manor house that once belonged to a minor noble named Ponson Freel, who was put to the sword by the people of Ithmong in the bloody days that followed the fall of the royal family. In the chaos, his home was looted and then abandoned for eight years.

To keep intruders away from this house, the Knights have summoned several lesser baatezu that they have bound into their service through the use of powerful spells. Within five miles of the manor, there is a 10% chance each turn that the PCs encounter the Knights' baatezu patrol.

Hamatula (1): INT very; AL LE; AC 1; MV 12; HD 7; hp 52; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/2-8/3-12; SA hug for 2-8 hp per round if both claws hit, spell-like powers (at 12th level of ability); spells always active: *know alignment;* spells usable once per round, one at a time: *advanced illusion, animate dead, charm person, infravision, suggestion, teleport without error, affect normal fires, hold person, produce flame, pyrotechnics;* spells usable once per day: *gate* (35% chance of success for 1-4 hamatula or 50% chance for 2-12 abishai); radiate *fear* upon first striking opponent; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to fire, poison; half damage from gas and cold attacks; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 19; XP 23,000; MC8 (Baatezu, lesser).

Osyluth (4): INT very; AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 32, 31, 30, 27; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8/3-12 plus poison (save at −3 or lose 1-4 points of strength for 1-10 rounds); SA spell-like powers (at 12th level of ability); spells always active: *know alignment;* spells usable once per round, one at a time: *advanced illusion, animate dead, charm person, infravision, suggestion, teleport without error, fly, improved phantasmal force, invisibility, wall of ice;* spells usable once per day: *gate* (35% chance of 1-2 osyluths or 50% chance of 1-100 nupperibo); see perfectly in normal darkness; radiate *fear* in 5′ radius; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to fire, poison; half damage from gas and cold attacks; MR 30%; SZ L; ML 12; XP

24,000; MC8 (Baatezu, lesser).

The baatezu's orders are to kill anyone who enters the vicinity of the manor, and to leave no evidence of the fate that befell them. In other words, the fiends will eat any PCs they kill or capture. Adventurers who flee as a result of the baatezu's fear auras are prevented from escaping either by the baatezus' spells (*hold person, wall of ice*) or by being chased until the baatezu catch up. If the fiends are seriously threatened, they *teleport* away from the area, leaving the wizards to sort out their own problems. As the baatezu are only tenuously held in check by the spells of the wizards, they are capable of breaking free of the magicks and returning to the Hells once they have attempted to carry out their appointed task.

The wizards' base is located on top of a small hill overlooking the surrounding farmland. Once a worthy home for any nobleman, the house has since fallen into disrepair. If the party climbs the hill during the day, they see no signs of habitation. At night, however, several lights glow dimly through the boarded-up windows.

If the party searches for a secret entrance, the DM™ should ask the players where their characters are looking. Halfway up the hill, on the west side, is a large pair of doors concealed by a permanent illusion of shrubbery, grass, and earth. This feature was installed by a wizard who owed Ponson Freel a favor. Behind the doors, a 10′-wide, 15′-high corridor slopes up to the cellar. The doors have been further protected by the Knights of the Shield, who have cast the spells *alarm, wizard lock,* and *symbol of pain* on them. Note that PCs who successfully track either the earth elemental or the osyluth (see Ithmong Area Random Encounters) will be led to this spot. The tracks end abruptly, providing the party with a clue to the entrance's location.

If the PCs walk straight up the hill to the house, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The manor before you has seen better days. The iron gates leading into the courtyard have been forced open and now swing from their remaining hinges. The courtyard itself is overgrown with weeds, and you can see slabs of masonry here and there among the long grass. On your right are what were once stables, with the slates coming loose from the roof, and on your left is a dilapidated old shed. Straight ahead is the manor, clearly once the home of a wealthy nobleman, now a sorry-looking building with boarded-up windows and a crumbling facade.

Once inside the courtyard, PCs attempting to move quietly hear the sound of a horse's whinny coming from the stables. If the party is moving through the courtyard normally, nothing can be heard.

Courtyard

1. Stables.

> The smell of manure and the sounds of horses snorting and whinnying greet you as you push open the doors. Inside are 10 horses, moving nervously in their stalls. Hay lies strewn everywhere, and there are sacks of grain in the northwest corner. Obviously the manor isn't as deserted as it seems.

The horses are used to people and soon settle down unless provoked, in which case they may make enough noise to attract the attention of the occupants of the house.

2. Shed. This rundown building contains several shovels, pickaxes and spades, all coated with dried earth. These are the tools used by the Knights to bury the beacons. Also in here, under a pile of sacking, is an unactivated Thayvian beacon (see sidebar for description). The raised design on this bronze disk depicts a hydra. Keseri decided that the chance of finding a hydra within range of the device was too remote and did not bother to activate this beacon.

First Floor

3. Entrance Hall. The large iron-bound front door is *wizard locked* (at 7th level). Once past the door, the PCs enter the hall of the house.

> You have come into a dingy entrance hall lit by candles. Ahead, a stone staircase flanked by two suits of plate armor ascends to the second floor. A door stands open on your right, leading into some sort of cloakroom. Other doors lead out of the hall: one on either side of the stairs, one on the left-hand wall, and two more on the right.

The hall is unoccupied, but a *magic mouth* spell has been cast on one of the suits of armor, triggering a cry of "Intruders! To arms! To arms!" when anyone approaches within 15′ of the stairs. This will alert the fighters in area 9 and the knight Thurrin in area 8, who will arrive in the hall on the next round and the round after, respectively.

4. Cloakroom. This small room contains the outer garments of the house's occupants. There are 11 typical traveling cloaks: 10 normal ones and a *cloak of poisonousness* placed here by Keseri.

5. Privy. This tiny room contains nothing more than the most primitive toilet facilities. There are no provisions for washing here.

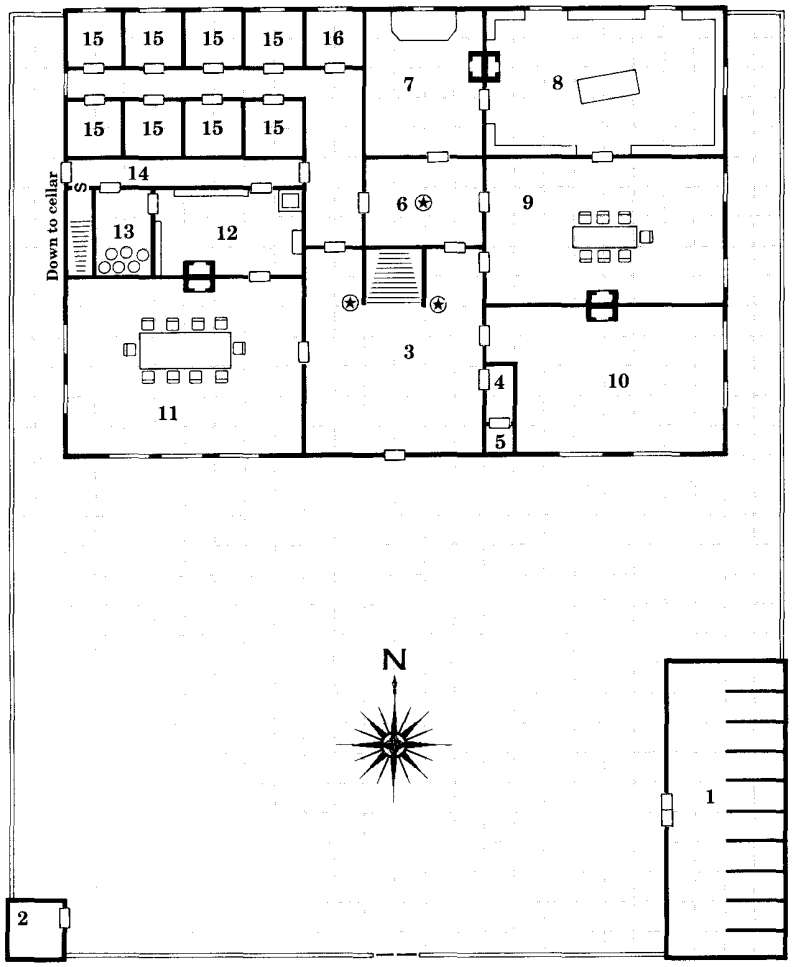
6. Hallway. This chamber is bare except for a mutilated piece of sculpture that stands in its center. Once a finely crafted statue of Ponson Freel, it is now a headless, armless torso daubed with revolutionary slogans. Fragments of the statue's head and arms still lie on the floor. The wizards have no reason to clean up the place.

7. Music Room. The lord of the manor used to invite musicians to perform for his guests in this room. A 1′-high dais stands under the window at the north end. Smashed furniture lies strewn around the room, and partly burned paintings fill the fireplace. This room is not used by the Knights and has been left exactly as they found it.

8. Study. This room was ransacked by looters during the "Ten Black Days of Eleint," but many of the books kept in here were left unscathed. They fill the shelves lining the walls, and a number are piled up on the table in the center. Thurrin, one of the Knights, is interested in antiquarian books and has spent many a spare hour attempting to catalog the volumes here. If the PCs entered the manor without triggering the *magic mouth* in area 3, they will find him here pottering about among

THE MANOR
Courtyard and First Floor

1 square = 5′



the books. A battle in this room will alert the fighters in area 9.

Thurrin: AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12; W7; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 8, D 15, C 10, I 16, W 14, Ch 9; ML 8; XP 2,000; *dagger +1, bracers of defense AC 5.*

Spells memorized: *burning hands, cantrip, comprehend languages, magic missile; invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image; hold person, Melf's minute meteors; dimension door.*

Additional spells in spell book (kept in area 31): *alarm, detect magic, feather fall, hold portal, read magic, wall of fog; blindness, darkness 15′ radius, calming sphere, knock, magic mouth, spectral hand, web, wizard lock; dispel magic, item, lightning bolt, protection from normal missiles, slow, tongues; fire trap, massmorph, vacancy.*

Thurrin is a small, middle-aged man with graying hair and spectacles, who loves books. His ambition is to obtain enough money to set up a library to rival Candlekeep, and it is for this reason that he fell in with Keseri and the Knights. Keseri is beginning to regret bringing Thurrin along, as he seems to be more concerned with trying to put the manor's book collection together than with their mission. Nevertheless, he has proved useful in organizing the various wards and magical alarms in the house: he cast all the *wizard lock* spells in the manor, except the one in Keseri's room (area 32).

Thurrin is not a brave man. Before battling the PCs, he will attempt to cast a *mirror image* spell on himself and will use a *dimension door* spell to escape if his life is in danger. If the PCs meet him in the hall (area 3), he will hang back, allowing the fighters to deal with the party but helping out with a *hold person* spell if he gets the chance.

If captured, Thurrin will cooperate fully with the PCs. He knows how the beacons work but not how to deactivate them. He will not hesitate to blame Keseri for everything and will tell the PCs where to find him.

9. Smoking Room. This room has been taken over by the wizards' assistants: six human fighters named Mellin, Raldo, Cresk, Hettur, Parten, and Shurd. If the PCs manage to bypass the *magic mouth* in area 3, they will find these six fellows in here, seated in torn but comfortable chairs around a low table, playing cards. There are piles of coins (97 sp, 38 gp) on the table. The men are wearing chain mail and have their weapons close at hand.

Fighters (6): AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; F8; hp 56, 52, 48, 46, 42, 38; THAC0 13; #AT 2/1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with long sword); S 16, D 12, C 13, I 8, W 8, Ch 9; ML 16; XP 975; chain mail, long sword, dagger.

These men are fiercely loyal to Keseri. If facing an obviously superior foe, they will attempt to attract the attention of the wizards Drazlun and Sarakos, who are working upstairs in the laboratory (area 18). If captured, they can tell the PCs little of what the wizards are doing, and will say nothing unless *charmed.*

10. Drawing Room. This is the room to which the lord's female guests would retire after dinner; it now stands completely demolished. Broken furniture and torn curtains lie scattered everywhere. The chamber has been left undisturbed by the Knights.

11. Dining Room. This room is one of those used by the Knights and is lit by torches. The long table has been righted, and 10 unbroken chairs have been

positioned around it. The fireplace has a small fire still burning in it. Even so, the chamber is but a shadow of its former self. Slogans such as "Forward with the People" and "Death to the Aristos" adorn the walls, and the room is devoid of the gold candlesticks and silver salvers of old.

12. Kitchen. This room is equipped with a large brick fireplace, stone basin, worktops, and cupboards. There is also a small well set into the floor that supplies the house with water. Raldo is a reasonable cook and makes good use of the kitchen and the wizards' fairly limited stores to provide food for the rest of the Knights.

13. Pantry. This room contains the food stores that the Knights brought with them to the manor. There are several barrels of salted beef, pickled fish, and other preserved foods, as well as a large slab of cheese and one nearly empty barrel of ale.

14. Corridor. This corridor was used by the lord's servants and by tradesmen bringing food supplies to the manor. The door to the courtyard is *wizard locked* (7th level) and has an *alarm* spell cast on it, triggered by touching either side of the door without saying the password "Famine." The ringing sound caused by the spell will alert Keseri in the cellar but will not attract the attention of the other Knights, due to the intervening doors and walls.

The secret door to the cellar stairs is also *wizard locked* and protected by a *fire trap* spell cast by Thurrin. The *fire trap* inflicts 1d4 + 7 hp damage on anyone within a 5' radius of the person who touches the door without using the password ("Bang"). Each victim may make a saving throw vs. spells for half damage. This explosion will also alert Keseri.

15. Servants' Rooms. Each of these identical chambers contains a simple bed, stool, and bedside table. The servants of the manor fled before the mob came for their master. Some, in fact, joined the mob and helped to loot the house. These rooms are currently not in use.

16. Servants' Washroom. This chamber contains a copper bathtub and a simple toilet. It is not used by the Knights.

Second Floor

All the bedrooms on this floor have identical furniture (a bed, bedside table, desk, chair, wardrobe, chest of drawers, chamber pot) unless otherwise specified.

17. Hallway. The stairs lead up to an empty hallway. If there has been a disturbance downstairs, or if the PCs are not making any efforts to be quiet as they mount the staircase, Drazlun and Sarakos (see area 18) will attack them here, coming in through the western door.

18. Laboratory.

> This room seems to have been converted from a bedroom to a laboratory. There is still a bed in here, but it has been shoved into the far corner to make way for tables laden with bizarre glassware and jars of strange-colored powders and liquids. There is barely time to take it all in as you become aware of two robed figures who have just emerged from behind a curtain.

The two men are Drazlun and Sarakos, Keseri's assistants.

Drazlun: AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; W10; hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 10, D 17, C 11, I 18, W 15, Ch 13; ML 14; XP 3,000; *dagger of venom, bracers of defense AC 3, wand of frost* (38 charges), *brooch of shielding.*

Spells memorized: *burning hands, magic missile* (×2), *shocking grasp; darkness 15' radius, flaming sphere, ray of enfeeblement, stinking cloud; fireball, protection from normal missiles, slow; Evard's black tentacles, polymorph other; feeblemind, teleport.*

Additional spells in spell book: *armor, cantrip, charm person, dancing lights, detect magic, enlarge, gaze reflection, hold portal, read magic, unseen servant; continual light, ESP, glitterdust, knock, Leomund's trap, misdirection, spectral hand, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter; blink, clairvoyance, dispel magic, explosive runes, fly, haste, monster summoning I, wraithform; confusion, dimension door, minor globe of invulnerability, monster summoning II, wall of ice; animate dead, dismissal, sending.*

Drazlun is about 35 years old, with jet black hair and olive skin. He would be a handsome man if not for the cruelty of his smile. Although not a specialist, Drazlun is eager to learn more about the summoning of fiends and other beasts from the Lower Planes, and is gaining much knowledge from Keseri. Nevertheless, even he finds Keseri's pronouncements on the "majesty" of such creatures unnerving.

Drazlun is dedicated to the Knights, but not to Keseri in particular. If it looks as though the PCs are likely to upset the operation in Ithmong, he will *teleport* to Zazesspur to warn Hhune rather than staying around to get killed. Drazlun is fond of using spells that are quick to cast, and often resorts to his wand.

Sarakos: AL NE; AC 2; MV 12; W9; hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 16, C 10, I 16, W 16, Ch 15; ML 14; XP 2,000; *staff of striking* (15 charges), *bracers of defense AC 6, ring of protection +2.*

Spells memorized: *charm person, color spray, magic missile* (×2); *hypnotic pattern, ray of enfeeblement, web; dispel magic, hold person, suggestion; fumble, wall of fire; Bigby's interposing hand.*

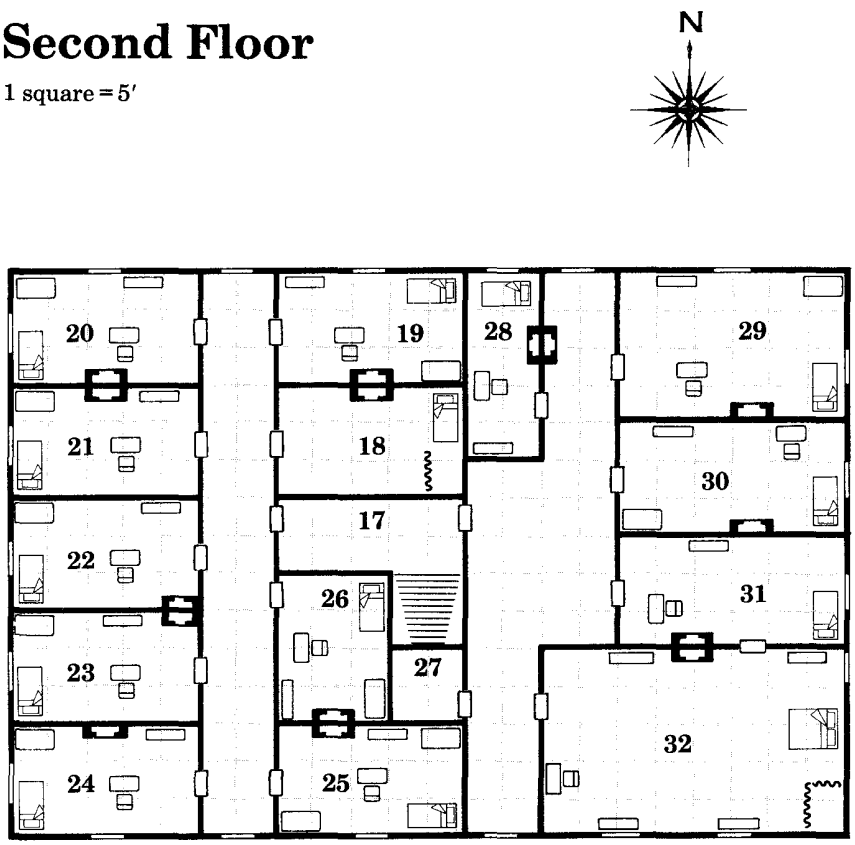
Spells in spell book: *affect normal fires, cantrip, chill touch, detect magic, friends, light, read magic, taunt; alter self, bind, deeppockets, detect invisibility, fog cloud, irritation, Melf's acid arrow, spectral hand; feign death, fireball, hold undead, infravision, Leomund's tiny hut, lightning bolt; charm monster, Otiluke's resilient sphere, polymorph other; dream, stone shape.*

Sarakos is 28 years old, very young for a wizard of his abilities. He is blond with blue eyes and has an endearing, almost childlike, expression that's completely contradictory to his sadistic and calculating nature. He joined the Knights in his thirst for power, seeing himself in Keseri's position in one or two years—sooner if he can get rid of Drazlun, who is one rung above him on the ladder.

Sarakos cares about only himself. He will surrender and tell the PCs everything if in danger of losing his life. If he thinks he can get away with it, he will tell them he was duped by the other mages, using a *charm person* spell on one of the PCs to make sure of some support. In combat, Sarakos tries to neutralize the most powerful opponents (tough-looking fighters and any mages) first. To do this, he casts *hold person* and *fumble* spells. Then he uses his other spells, defending himself with his *staff of striking* if attacked in melee.

THE MANOR
Second Floor

1 square = 5′



Drazlun and Sarakos have set up this laboratory to work on the manufacture of new compounds for use in protective circles. The equipment here is worth approximately 5,000 gp if the party can get all the glass out without breaking any. The chemicals and ingredients will sell for a like amount to an alchemist.

19. Bedroom. This unused room contains the usual bedroom furniture.

20. Mellin's Room. Mellin's *shield +1* hangs on the back of the door. In the bottom of the wardrobe is a small wooden box containing 153 gp and a piece of onyx worth 75 gp.

21. Raldo's Room. Raldo keeps his nonmagical shield under the bed, together with a *spear +1*. Stuffed in a hole in the mattress is a small leather pouch containing his treasure: 22 pp and 219 gp.

22. Cresk's Room. Lying on the bed is a nonmagical light crossbow and a quiver containing five *bolts +1* and 10 normal bolts. Cresk has no treasure; he has been losing badly at cards recently.

23. Hettur's Room. Hettur is a slob. His clothes are strewn all over the floor. Like Cresk, he has been losing at cards and has no treasure.

24. Parten's Room. Parten has a fixation with weaponry. Propped against the wall in the southeast corner of the room are three spears and a halberd, all nonmagical. In the bottom of the wardrobe there are more weapons: a horseman's flail, a battle axe, and a pair of throwing knives. Parten has hidden a silk bag containing 15 pp and 97 gp under the ashes in the grate.

25. Shurd's Room. Shurd has no spare weapons or money. He joined the Knights because he needed the cash. He has, however, hidden a skin of wine in his chest of drawers.

26. Bedroom. This room is currently not in use.

27. Nursery. This chamber was where Ponson Freel's children slept when they were babies. Now unused, it is empty except for an old crib.

28. Bedroom. This room is currently not in use.

29. Sarakos's Room. As well as the standard bedroom furniture, there is a chest under the bed. This chest is locked (Sarakos has the key) and trapped with a poison needle (type F, save or die) that is triggered by anyone putting either the key or a lock pick into the lock without first pressing down a small catch on the back of the chest. Inside are Sarakos's spell books, two potions of *extra-healing* (dark purple with an aniseed taste), a *Murlynd's spoon,* and a leather bag containing 300 pp.

30. Drazlun's Room. Drazlun has locked his belongings in the bottom drawer of his chest of drawers and keeps the key on his person. He has cast a *Leomund's trap* spell on the drawer above to fool any would-be thieves. Inside the bottom drawer are Drazlun's spell books (protected by *explosive runes* spells to prevent them from falling into the hands of his enemies) as well as a pouch containing 35 pp and a pair of emerald earrings worth 2,000 gp.

31. Thurrin's Room. This room is piled high with the books that Thurrin has decided to keep from the remains of the manor's library. They cover a wide

range of subjects, from elvish poetry to the history of Calimshan. Thurrin has little in the way of money—he has hidden 35 gp in a silk bag under his pillow—and has left his spell books lying around with all the other volumes. It will take the PCs a turn to find them if they search the room carefully, checking every book.

This room belonged to Ponson Freel's wife, hence the connecting door to area 32, which Thurrin has blocked with a wardrobe.

32. Keseri's Room. This room is similar to all the others on this floor except that the bed is twice the size and there are two bedside tables, two chairs, two wardrobes and two chests of drawers. In addition, there is a copper bathtub concealed behind a curtain in the southeast corner. The door to the room from the hallway is protected by a *symbol of death* that affects all who read it or touch the door. The connecting door to area 31 is unprotected, but PCs in that room must move the wardrobe to find it.

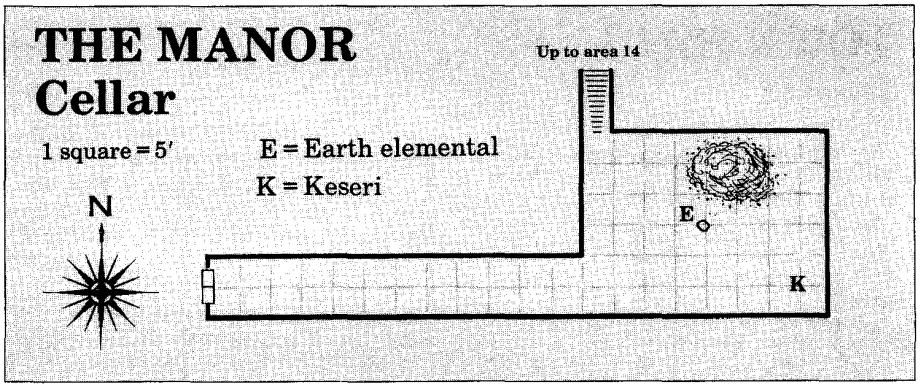
Aside from four fine silk robes (worth 100 gp each) hanging in one of the wardrobes, there are no valuables here. However, in the *wizard locked* second drawer of the desk there is a bone scroll tube with three pieces of parchment inside it. The first is a map of the Ithmong area, marking the locations of all the Thayvian beacons and the extent of their influence. The second is a list of command words keyed to the map; each beacon has one word to activate it and another to deactivate it. The third scroll is a letter that reads:

> *Dear Keseri,*
>
> *Congratulations on your wonderful efforts. Things here in Zazesspur are proceeding well also. My popularity grows daily and the council is coming under increasing pressure from the people. How do you feel about the title "Mayor of Ithmong"? Or Duke, perhaps?*
>
> *Congratulations again on a job well done.*
>
> *Hhune*

Cellar

When the PCs walk down the stairs into the cellar, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you descend the stairs, a dank, earthy smell drifts upward. You come into a damp, dimly lit cellar. Standing in the southeast corner is a sallow-complexioned wizard with a shaven head and pointed beard, wearing black robes covered in mystical symbols. Between you and the wizard is a huge figure composed of mud and earth in the rough shape of a man. The wizard points, and the creature moves toward you.



The wizard is Minshak Keseri, the leader of the Knights of the Shield in Ithmong. He summoned the elemental, using a *stone of commanding earth elementals,* and has cast a *protection from good* spell on himself in case he should lose control of it. Keseri will concentrate on maintaining control of the earth elemental until either it or the PCs are destroyed. If he is wounded, control is lost and the elemental attempts to slay him, attacking for two rounds although unable to hit due to Keseri's *protection from good* spell. After two rounds, it either returns to its home plane (25%) or attacks the PCs (75%). Once Keseri loses control of the elemental or the party slays it, he attacks the PCs with his spells. As an additional defense, the wizard has cast a *protection from normal missiles* spell on himself.

If the PCs enter the cellar through the secret passage from outside, the *alarm* spell on the double doors will warn Keseri of their approach, and he will take identical precautions.

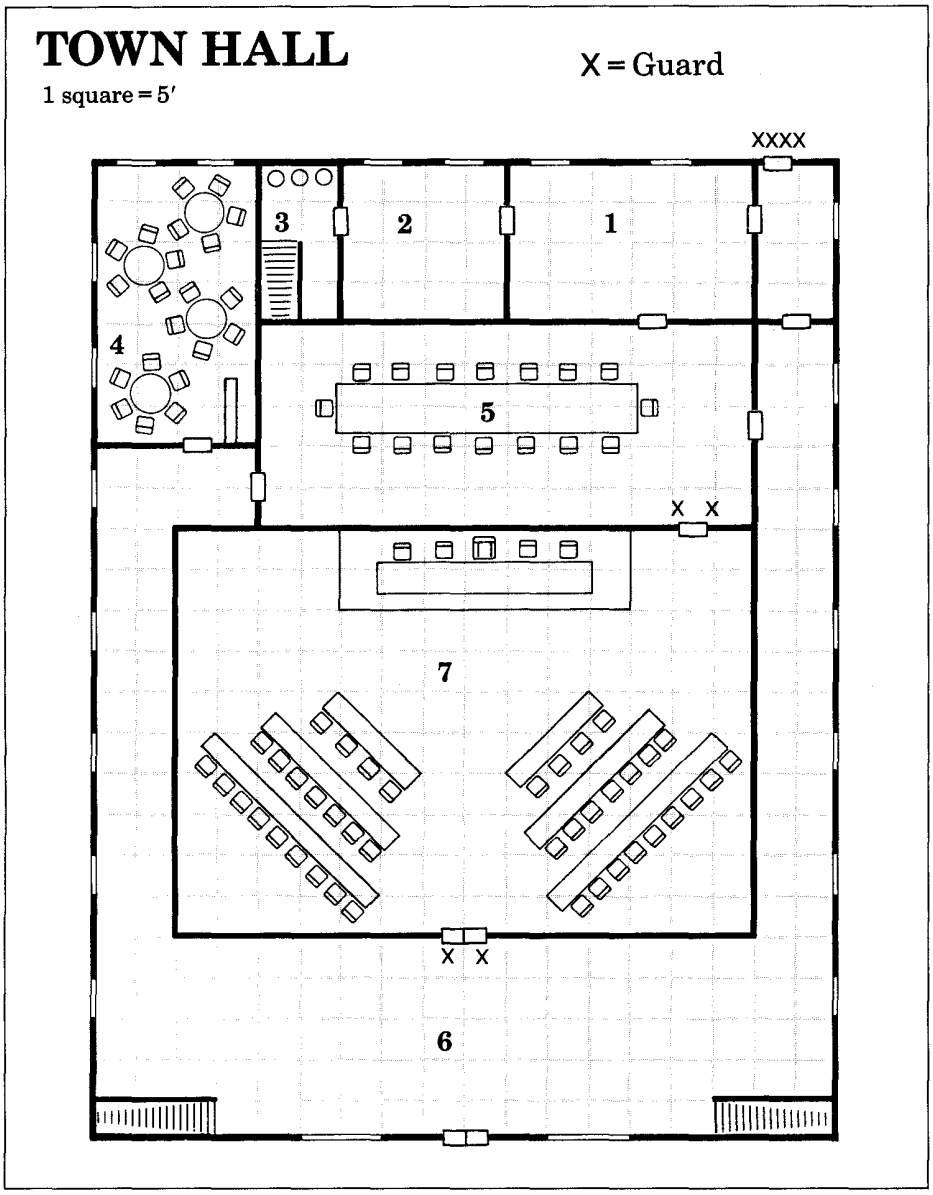
Earth elemental: INT low; AL N; AC 2; MV 6; HD 12; hp 72; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 4-32; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 15; XP 6,000; MC1.

Minshak Keseri: AL LE; AC −2; MV 12; W16 (conjurer); hp 49; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA casts conjuration spells with −1 penalty on saving throws; SD saves at +1 against conjuration spells; S 12, D 17, C 16, I 18, W 14, Ch 13; ML 18; XP 10,000; *dagger +2, bracers of defense AC 3, cloak of protection +2, wand of polymorphing* (14 charges), *ring of spell turning.*

Spells memorized: *burning hands* (×2), *grease, protection from good, reduce, shocking grasp; blindness, blur, levitate, Melf's acid arrow, ray of enfeeblement, summon swarm; dispel magic, flame arrow, hold person, monster summoning I, suggestion, vampiric touch; bestow curse, confusion, enervation, Evard's black tentacles, fear, monster summoning II; domination, feeblemind* (×2), *hold monster, monster summoning III, summon shadow; conjure animals, disintegrate, flesh to stone, monster summoning IV; monster summoning V, power word stun, prismatic spray; monster summoning VI, symbol.*

Spells in spell book: *armor, audible glamer, cantrip, charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, enlarge, find familiar, mount, read magic, unseen servant; ESP, forget, invisibility, Leomund's trap, magic mouth, wizard lock; delude, explosive runes, fly, item, Leomund's tiny hut, phantom steed, protection from normal missiles, sepia snake sigil, slow; emotion, extension I, Leomund's secure shelter, minor creation, minor globe of invulnerability, polymorph other, wizard eye; animate dead, conjure elemental, dismissal, Leomund's secret chest, Mordenkainen's faithful hound; ensnarement, globe of invulnerability, invisible stalker; Drawmij's instant summons, vanish; binding.*

Minshak Keseri was once a member of the Red Wizards of Thay and a leading light in their School of Conjuration and Summoning. After his master plan to further the Thayvian cause through a



string of assassinations in the Heartlands was thwarted by another Red Wizard, Keseri quit the sect, tired of the constant wrangling between the various factions.

He came to the Sword Coast, where he was recruited into the Knights of the Shield by Hhune. When Keseri left Thay, he took the secret of manufacturing Thayvian beacons with him and helped Hhune develop the Ithmong operation. Hhune rewarded him by placing him in charge of its execution.

As well as being keen to extend his own power and influence, Keseri is also motivated by his deep-rooted fascination with fiends and other beings from the Lower Planes, seeing them as "the most perfect creatures in the multiverse." Much of his life has been dedicated to understanding these beings and seeking ways to control them. Most of his colleagues, past and present, find this unnatural.

Keseri is a typical Thayvian in appearance, sallow-skinned with the shaved head and neatly trimmed beard of the Red Wizards, although he has swapped his scarlet robes for fine silk ones made to his own specifications. He keeps his spell books and other valuables safe in a *Leomund's secret chest,* always carrying the replica on his person. If the PCs retrieve the chest from the Ethereal plane, they will find, in addition to the spell books: 3,000 gp (Zazesspur gulders), two potions of *extra-healing*, a 3′ × 5′ *carpet of flying,* a *hat of disguise,* and a pair of *slippers of spider-climbing.* The *stone of commanding earth elementals* remains in the center of the room unless destroyed in the battle.

Keseri's tactics are to disable the PCs long enough for him to use *monster summoning* spells. His *ring of spell turning* gives him a certain confidence, but he is highly vulnerable to melee attacks. He attempts to take out any warriors first, using his most powerful spells (for example, *disintegrate*) and his wand.

Keseri fights to the death. All his life has been dedicated to gaining great power. If his plans in Ithmong come to nothing he may as well be dead. If he is captured, he will not cooperate with the PCs unless magically compelled to do so.

Zazesspur

With the wizards defeated, the PCs should be able to rid the area of the monsters by deactivating the beacons. To do this, they need to speak the proper deactivating command word within 30′ of each beacon. Once this is done, any monsters still alive will seek to leave the area immediately and return to their normal hunting grounds.

The PCs should return to Zazesspur as quickly as possible to expose Hhune before it is too late.

When the PCs arrive back in Zazesspur, they will find that things have moved on significantly since they were last here. Hhune's supporters have been working overtime to promote his cause, and banners reading "Hhune for Crown Prince" and "Hhune! The People's Choice" hang from houses and inns throughout the city. It seems as though the whole town is in the streets and moving in one direction—toward Market Square where the town hall is located.

If the PCs stop to ask why everyone is headed the same way, a citizen tells them that the town council is expected to hand over the city to Lord Hhune this very hour. The PCs may nevertheless want to look for Paddy Stoutfellow and Sylvanus Moondrop, but they will be unable to find them; the two Company of Eight members will not appear again until the end of the adventure.

If the PCs make their way to Market Square with everyone else, they find themselves stuck in a massive crowd. When the party eventually reaches the square, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> It seems as if the entire population of Zazesspur has crammed itself into the square to witness this historic occasion and to cheer their hero, the man you know to be a tyrant. As you peer over the heads in front of you, you can see a large number of guards holding back the enthusiastic populace from the doors to the town hall. You are not going to be able to reach these doors very easily, and if you do manage it, there is nothing in the guards' faces to suggest they are likely to listen to a band of armed adventurers with some story about an evil plot by the people's choice for king.

The PCs should try to think of a way to reach the council chamber. Time is of the essence, so the DM™ should not let them take too long to come up with an idea. There is a tradesmen's entrance in Needle Street, around the back. PCs making an intelligence check will remember this from their time in Zazesspur before the adventure started.

The back door is also guarded, but by only four men-at-arms, who have been positioned here to prevent any unauthorized personnel from entering the building while the council is in session. Unfortunately for the PCs, these men are members of the Knights of the Shield who have been instructed to kill anyone answering to the party's description. The Knights have other mages as well as those in Ithmong. Thanks to their scrying, Hhune is fully aware of events at the manor and is determined not to let his plans in Zazesspur be ruined too.

Knights of the Shield (4): AL NE; AC 4; MV 9; F9; hp 63, 60, 58, 53; THAC0 12; #AT 2/1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with long sword); S 17, D 14, C 14, I 9, W 9, Ch 8; ML 16; XP 1,400; chain mail, shield, long sword.

The Knights wait for the PCs to approach and then attack immediately, hoping to catch them by surprise. If the combat goes against them, the Knights flee inside the town hall, shouting for help. This will bring the Knights in area 5 to their aid in one round. Once the guards are defeated, the PCs can enter the building.

The Town Hall

Although this building has two stories, only the first floor is detailed here. The second floor, which consists of offices and the city court room, can be improvised by the DM, but this should not be necessary.

1. Kitchen. This large room is equipped with the best stoves and utensils available. There are three cooks (use villager statistics from "The Villages") at work here; they look up, startled, when the PCs enter. Too frightened and stunned to do anything more, they will point the PCs in the direction of the council chamber if asked.

2. Pantry. Fine food of all kinds is stored here. Whole pig carcasses hang from hooks, and the shelves are piled high with fruits and cheeses.

3. Cellar Stairs. Three barrels of wine stand against the north wall. They have been brought up from the cellar in readiness for the celebration banquet this evening.

4. Smoking Room. Similar to the tap room of a fine inn, but with the added feature of a carpet, this is where the councillors come to relax after a long session in the chamber.

5. Banquet Hall. The council leader holds his banquets in this sumptuously decorated chamber. Crystal chandeliers hang from the ceiling, and there are several fine paintings on the walls. The large table is laid for the celebration banquet to be held tonight in honor of the soon-to-be Crown Prince Hhune. Two guards, both **Knights** (hp 53, 50), watch the door leading to area 7. If a fight breaks out here, Hhune orders the guards in the lobby (area 6) to rush through the council chamber to the scene of the battle; they arrive on the next round.

6. Lobby. This spacious area has a marble floor, an indication of Zazesspur's wealth. Stairs in the southeast and southwest corners lead up to the second floor. Two **Knights** (hp 61, 56) stand guard by the doors to the council chamber (area 7). They have been ordered to prevent the PCs from disturbing the meeting at all costs but not to leave their post unless directed by Hhune himself.

The sound of a battle here alerts Hhune inside the council chamber; he orders the guards in area 5 to aid their comrades. These men will arrive in one round. Once the guards from the back door and those from the lobby and the banquet hall are defeated, Hhune is on his own. The guards outside are needed there to keep the crowd under control.

7. Council Chamber. When the PCs enter the council chamber, read or paraphrase the following to the players. If the party enters through the door in the north wall, this description will need adjusting.

> You have entered the council chamber itself. As you step over the threshold, the dignitaries of Zazesspur fall silent. The room is large, and at the north end is a dais on which are seated five men. The man in the center is old, with white hair and a white beard. To his left is a tall, burly man with cropped black hair and piercing blue eyes. Everyone else in the chamber looks surprised, but this man looks furious.
>
> The other men on the dais and the men and women seated at long tables before it look like typical town dignitaries: wealthy and well fed. The angry man gets up but is restrained by the older fellow, who stands, and in a commanding voice asks "What is the meaning of this intrusion?"

The speaker is Aldegust, the leader of the council and one of Zazesspur's most respected citizens. The PCs are being given the opportunity to present their case. As soon as they begin to accuse Hhune, the Knight denounces them as liars. When they attempt to pass any of the papers they found in the manor to Aldegust, Hhune leaps over the table to attack them. Aldegust bangs his gavel and attempts to call a halt to the battle. The other councillors scream in panic and try to keep out of the way.

Lord Hhune: AL LE; AC −1; MV 24 (12); F15; hp 101; THAC0 6; #AT 5/2; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with bastard sword); S 18/62, D 18, C 17, I 15, W 14, Ch 16; ML 18; XP 8,000; *chain mail +2, bastard sword +2, ring*

of fire resistance, ring of human influence, boots of speed.

Lord Hhune is an intelligent, subtle schemer. He has worked on his Tethyr plan for several years, gradually earning the trust of more and more of Zazesspur's citizens and climbing higher up the social ladder. Although naturally charismatic, his *ring of human influence* has proved invaluable to him, making it easier for him to persuade more suspicious and clever individuals of his "good intentions." Through a network of supporters—some Knights, many just gullible members of the public—Hhune has won over nearly everyone in Zazesspur and is likely to win over the rest of Tethyr.

If Hhune's plans succeed, Tethyr will find itself in the grip of a ruthless tyrant, backed by powerful individuals and even, it is rumored, the arch-fiend who is said to head the Knights of the Shield. Realizing that the PCs might try to interrupt the meeting, Hhune positioned his own men outside and came prepared, wearing his magical chain mail under his robes.

Aldegust: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12.

Councillors (32): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 7.

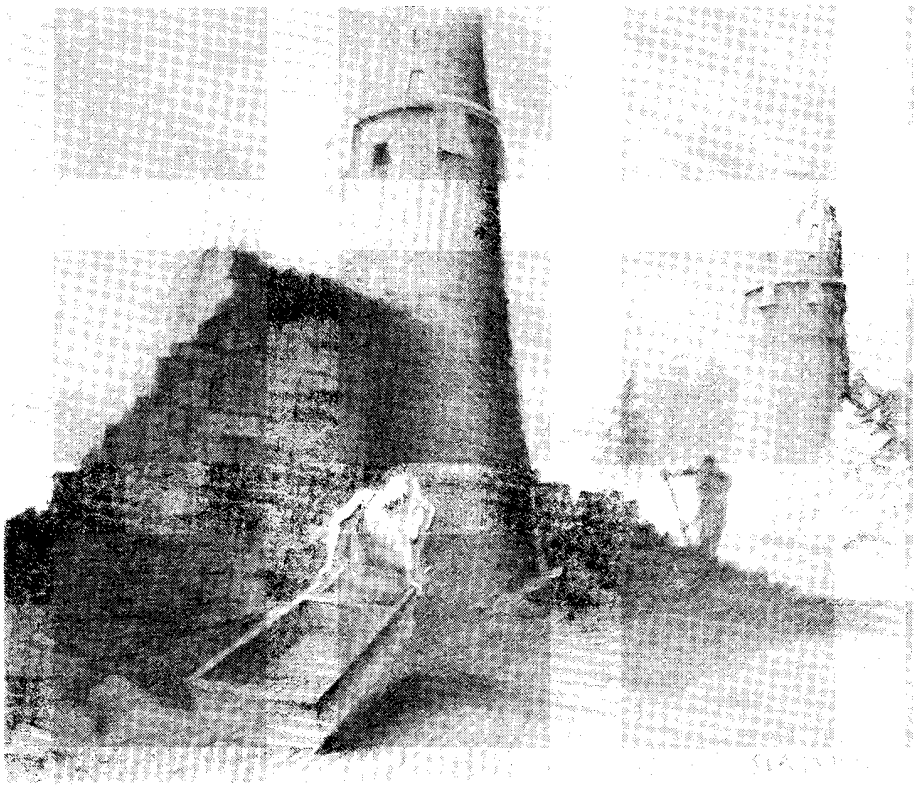
Hhune attacks any identifiable mages first, hoping to eliminate them before anyone can cast something nasty at him. He fights like a caged tiger, knowing the game is up but refusing to give in to his fate. If seriously wounded, he will try to leave through the north door, relying on his *boots of speed* to help him outdistance pursuit. If no escape is possible, he fights to the death, certain that this will be his fate if taken alive.

Concluding the Adventure

After the battle is over, Aldegust examines the PCs' evidence and questions them intensively. Once they have convinced him of Hhune's guilt, he walks out of the town hall's front doors and explains the situation to the people. There are shouts of "Liar!" and confused murmurs, but the crowd begins to disperse. Sylvanus Moondrop and Paddy Stoutfellow arrive and are admitted to the council chamber. After quietly conferring with Aldegust, they come over to congratulate the PCs on a job well done, and make arrangements to pay them their fee.

This module leaves the DM™ with several possibilities for further adventures. The Knights of the Shield will now seek to eliminate the PCs whenever their paths cross, and they may go out of their way to send a powerful member of their group to assassinate the party. The PCs' feud with the Knights can continue as long as the DM wishes. Perhaps the party will ultimately discover the identity of the shadowy leader of the organization.

Politically, Tethyr has been destabilized: the pro-monarchy movement in Zazesspur that supported Hhune has suffered a severe setback and may have lost its credibility for good. Gallowglass' failure to deal with the problems of Ithmong may lead to a popular uprising, perhaps supported by the military, resulting in the erstwhile tyrant being deposed; or he may remain in power, clamping down hard on his people to keep them in line. The PCs, also, have valuable allies in the Company of Eight, who may need the party's help again. Ω



THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

BY RICH STUMP

Giants and ghost trees and foul undead beasties . . .

Artwork by Bob Klasnich

Rich writes: "Players who operate primarily in the hack-and-slash mode have never made much sense to me. Now, slicing up a bunch of goblins is one thing, but what happens when a group of adventurers meets something too powerful for them? The underlying moral to this adventure is: 'Those who live by the sword, die by the sword . . . of something a lot tougher than they are.'"

"Things That Go Bump in The Night" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4-7 player characters of 3rd-6th level (about 25 total levels). The adventure is set in a sylvan forest. Elven, druid, and ranger PCs will be very helpful, but they are not necessary for enjoyment and successful completion of the adventure.

While there are ample opportunities for combat in the Brettonwood forest, players who operate primarily in hack-and-slash mode may soon find themselves bored or their characters very, very dead. The PCs must do some investigation and exploration to determine the extent of the problems in the Brettonwood. Players unwilling to spend time in noncombat situations may not receive a great deal of satisfaction from the adventure.

The sylvan Brettonwood can easily be assimilated into an existing campaign world as a separate forest or as a small part of a much larger wooded area. The Brettonwood is a temperate forest that receives a moderate amount of rainfall, and it lies slightly off the beaten path of human civilization.

The wood elves who dwell within the Brettonwood deal with humans on occasion, but they try to stay out of the affairs of men as much as possible. However, a new twist has appeared in an old elven problem, one that has forced them to seek the aid of others outside of the Brettonwood—and a convenient group of adventurers would be just the right solution.

History of the Brettonwood

The Brettonwood is an ancient forest that has been a part of the landscape for as long as anyone, even the elves, can remember. Untouched by the destructive hands of humans, the Brettonwood is home to countless species of flora, fauna, and faerie creatures. The beauty (and potential material value) of the Brettonwood has always been coveted

by outsiders. However, even the cleverest schemes of man, dwarf, or humanoid to steal the riches of the Brettonwood have met with failure for one reason or another.

As their failures mounted and rumors about the forest grew, humans and dwarves gave up on their ideas of taming the Brettonwood. For hundreds of years, only the curious, the foolhardy, or the incredibly stupid have entered the forest, let alone attempt to exploit it.

No one ever gave a hobgoblin an award for common sense or intelligence.

Over 800 years ago, a tribe of exceedingly numerous and powerful hobgoblins descended on the Brettonwood. Their leader was the infamous Drabkk the Stomach, an aptly named tyrant of incredible strength and girth who was well known for his habit of eating his foes during battle.

Having heard tales of the creatures and wealth within the Brettonwood, Drabkk decided that the forest would make an ideal stomping ground for his followers. Not only would they be free of the oppressive giants and bugbears who had taunted Drabkk for years, but the hobgoblins could beat up the weak, patsy faerie creatures that lived in the forest. Especially the elves. Drabkk had never liked creatures with slim pointy ears, as he had been bullied by goblins during his youth. Besides, Drabkk thought that elves tasted good.

The hobgoblins marched into the Brettonwood and settled atop a strategic hill overlooking a branch of the River Wilidiri. A fort was hastily constructed of stone quarried from bluffs to the north. Having worked most of their captives to death in the building of the fort, the hobgoblins decided to turn their occasional forays against the elves into an all-out war.

The vicious hobgoblin raids took the wood elf tribe of the Noraldai by surprise. While they had never trusted their new hobgoblin neighbors, the elves were neither prepared for nor expecting a war. As the hobgoblins began inflicting increasing casualties on the elves, the forest inhabitants rallied to aid the Noraldai. The war raged for months, with neither side able to gain an advantage.

Finally, Drabkk launched an all-out attack on the elves in an attempt to crush them permanently. He led his bloodthirsty troops on a rampage through the Brettonwood, easily pushing through the forest creatures' defenses.

At the edge of the largest elven village, Drabkk and his band were met by the legendary Noraldai champion Arahala Sorentia. Arahala, who was the greatest female fighter in the elven clan, challenged Drabkk to a duel. Drabkk gleefully accepted, hoping to destroy the insolent wood elf before he and his fellow hobgoblins mauled the surviving elves. During the duel, Drabkk became overwrought and tried to bite off Arahala's head. However, the elven warrior maiden knew that the quickest way to Drabbk's heart was through his stomach, and her well-placed strike slew the hobgoblin king instantly.

The elves' confidence was quickly restored, and they successfully counterattacked and routed the stunned hobgoblins. The tide of the war had swung permanently in favor of the elves, and within three weeks the hobgoblin fort fell. The Noraldai took no prisoners in the last battle and did not loot the hobgoblin fort. Noraldai priests had deemed the war to be an evil omen, and anything related to it was declared taboo. Although no wood elf would ever be allowed to return to the hobgoblin stronghold, it was allowed to remain standing as a sacred reminder of those evil days.

As the centuries passed, elven memories of the war became more legendary than factual. The Noraldai continued to shun the woods near the hobgoblin fort. This part of the Brettonwood came to be known as the Haunted Forest, since the elves believed that the vengeful spirits of defeated hobgoblins lurked therein.

About a year ago, strange noises began to emanate from the Haunted Wood. Soon, it was a rare night that was not filled with weird laughter and loud thunderous booms—all coming from the old hobgoblin fort. This concerned the Noraldai, as they believed that the hobgoblin spirits were preparing to attack their villages. The ancient taboo prevented the Noraldai elders from allowing any of the elves to explore the hobgoblin fort and attempt to verify this theory. A few friendly centaurs volunteered to scout the fort, but none of them returned.

At an emergency council, the tribal elders decided that outside help was needed. The elves had become deathly afraid of the Haunted Forest, and the tribal priests were not pleased at the prospect of facing an undead hobgoblin horde. The elders dispatched a few elven warriors to recruit some outsiders to go to the Haunted Forest and determine the source of this new threat. The elders told the messenger elves to find as many willing outsiders as possible—after all, only the group that brought the elves the information they desired would have to be rewarded. Also, the elders reasoned that while the demise of outsiders might be tragic, it would not significantly affect the Noraldai tribe. Having thus justified the need for and expediency of outside help, the Noraldai sent out messengers and waited for their quick return.

Notes on the Brettonwood

The Brettonwood is a very magical place. Lack of outside disturbances, combined with the forest's incredible age, have created a haven for many of the faerie races as well as unusual flora and fauna. The inherent sylvan magic of the Brettonwood, while not strong during the time of the elf-hobgoblin war, has intensified into an effective deterrent to those who would harm the forest or its inhabitants.

Non-natives of the Brettonwood begin radiating an invisible aura after being in the forest for more than 24 hours. While this aura does not harm those who experience it, magical faerie-kin (including but not limited to brownies, sprites, leprechauns, pixies, and dryads) are able to identify any adventurers as outsiders. A *detect magic* spell will reveal the aura's presence, and a successful *dispel magic* spell (vs. eighth-level magic) can remove the aura for 24 hours. The aura gradually fades away after the creature resides within the Brettonwood continuously for one year.

In addition, strange variations of flora have evolved in the Brettonwood. One peculiar species is the thrumwood, which appears to be a normal oak, ash, or yew tree. However, thrumwood trees have the ability to absorb sounds and release them after a short period of time. In game terms, any thrumwood is 90% likely to "capture" loud noises that occur within 60′ of the tree's trunk. The thrumwood then holds the sound for one round. If another thrumwood is within 60′, the first tree will pass the sound along by emitting the noise in the direction of the second thrumwood. If a

thrumwood receives a sound from another tree, but the only thrumwood within the 60′ range is the sending thrumwood, the receiving thrumwood emits its sound in a random direction. In this manner, sounds can be carried over great distances and emitted miles away from their original source.

The sole exception to this chain of passing captured sounds occurs when two thrumwood trees are within 10′ of each other. Any sound passed between them forms a "sound channel" in which the sound is sent back and forth between the two trees until it eventually dies out. Walking through a sound channel can be quite unnerving, as anyone who does so hears the same noise again and again!

Aside from capturing sounds, thrumwoods have no special powers and may be damaged or destroyed in the same manner as normal trees.

A second new species of trees is the ghostwood. These trees are pale, thin cousins of evergreen pines. The branches of the ghostwood begin very high up the slim, straight trunk. Neighboring deciduous trees often hide the sight of the ghostwoods' pale green needles from creatures on the forest floor.

The ghostwood radiates a magical aura of pacification and drowsiness to any who approach it. The standard range of a ghostwood's effect is a 20′ radius sphere; anyone who enters this region must make a saving throw vs. spells at +2 on the die roll. If the affected being fails to save, he suddenly feels tired and walks slowly to the trunk of the ghostwood for a short nap (1-4 turns).

Upon awakening, the creature must make a second saving throw vs. spells at normal chances. Success indicates that this ghostwood can exert no power over that being for 24 hours. However, the individual will feel sluggish for 1-6 hours afterward and will not want to exert himself during that time (−2 modifier on all ability checks and attack rolls).

Failure on the second saving throw mandates that the victim will not want to leave the ghostwood, as he has found an inner peace with it. Anyone so affected must be forcibly removed from the ghostwood's area of effect, but any rescuers also run the risk of becoming entranced by the tree. Unintelligent animals and immortal faerie creatures are unaffected by ghostwood, and elves' and half-elves' resistance to sleep is applicable against ghostwood trees.

If these problems aren't enough for intrepid PCs, the forest's inhabitants may cause them all kinds of embarrassment. The sprites, pixies, and other forest faeries enjoy playing tricks on outsiders—tricks that might place the PCs into deadly situations just so the faeries can see how the adventurers will react. If the PCs are destructive in the forest, the faeries' pranks become more terrifying and possibly lethal. For examples of faerie pranks, see area 6 and the "Forest Encounters" sidebar.

The Noraldai: Not Your Usual Wood Elves

The Noraldai clan has existed for over 3,000 years, having given up a semi-nomadic existence in the wooded hills north of the Brettonwood for permanent residence in the southern region of the forest. The self-sufficiency of the Noraldai, combined with their isolation in the forest, has given the wood elves an air of elitism. The Noraldai consider themselves to be superior to all humans and demihumans that live outside the Brettonwood, including other elves. However, the Noraldai are not so pretentious around the other inhabitants of the forest, as their relations with groups such as the centaurs and pixies are quite good.

The Noraldai number around 2,000 elves, and their population is divided between six villages. All of the elven villages are above the forest floor, on platforms that have been constructed in and around gigantic trees. These villages are accessible by stairs carefully carved inside the hearts of living trees. Not only are these entrances well hidden, but they are closely guarded.

The Noraldai are highly skilled in the arts of magic, and many of their warriors are fighter/wizards. However, they do not create weapons and armor to the same extent that their high-elven cousins do. Aside from swords, spears, arrowheads, and the occasional suit of elven chain mail, the Noraldai do little forgework. The Noraldai often trade for silver, which they work into beautiful pieces of jewelry. The wood elves have a great respect for nature and the fine arts; if an outsider is a ranger or druid, or is gifted with musical and artistic talent, he can expect to be treated kindly by the Noraldai.

The Noraldai do not think in terms of short-term events, because their lifespan is so long. Immediate action against small problems is not a concept that the Noraldai easily embrace; the wood elves prefer to ignore such events until they become too great to ignore. The Noraldai reason that most problems will go away or solve themselves without interference. This has caused difficulties in the past, and outsiders find the elves' apparent lack of common sense in such manners appalling. As a whole, the Noraldai are generally a level-headed people, but their inherent quirks make them seem very unusual to those who do not understand them.

The Noraldai have a great affinity for cats, and they give their pets free run of the Brettonwood. The gods help the person who harms an elven cat if the Noraldai find out!

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

The source of the "hauntings" at the hobgoblin fort is not the vengeful spirits that the Noraldai believe are present. Instead, the noises are being caused by a family of firbolg giant-kin who have lived in the Brettonwood for five years. The firbolgs moved into the Haunted Forest a year ago and found the hobgoblin ruins to be an ugly blemish on an otherwise beautiful area. The firbolgs decided that tearing down the crumbling fort (area 13) would benefit the forest, and they began to dismantle it. As the process of destroying the fort is a noisy one, the thrumwoods that grow nearby capture the sounds of the working firbolgs. These captured sounds are then transferred all the way to the thrumwoods that grow along the Wilidiri River (area 1). The high concentration of thrumwoods along this river make it easy for the noise to travel downriver to the Noraldai (area 2).

The firbolgs do not intend their cleanup efforts to harm the Noraldai or any other inhabitants of the forest. In fact, Clement, the treant protector of the Brettonwood (see area 9), is aware of the firbolgs' efforts and believes that they will be beneficial to the future of the Brettonwood. Clement is not, however, aware of the problems that this "sylvan renewal" creates for the Noraldai.

Once the PCs are aware that no hobgoblin spirits haunt the fort, they must learn who is responsible for the nighttime noises. The firbolgs live only four

miles from the ruined fort, and careful adventurers should be able to find the giant-kin and speak with them. Once the PCs have begun to communicate with the firbolgs and have told them of the problems they are creating (the firbolgs are destroying a place that is the site of a taboo sacred to the Noraldai, and the noise of pulling down the fort is frightening the elves), the firbolgs may agree to stop their work on the ruins.

In exchange, the firbolgs will want a favor from the adventurers. Haughnir, the leader of the firbolgs, tells the PCs that an evil witch has infringed on their old territory, land that rightfully belongs to the giant-kin. Haughnir informs the adventurers that if they can remove the witch's presence from the old firbolg domain, the giant-kin will stop their destruction and instead allow time to take its toll on the stones of the fort.

The witch, whom the firbolgs refer to as "Lady Ugly," is not a witch at all, nor is she evil. Her full name is Lady Alshria Ugleranod, and she is a renegade drow elf. Lady Ugleranod, as she prefers to be called, left her wealthy lifestyle and her people after she became disgusted with the wickedness and depravity of drow culture. She is simply trying to co-exist with the Brettonwood, and she has even begun to worship the forest deities. Lady Ugleranod does not feel that the firbolgs have treated her fairly. She has not approached the Noraldai for support, as she fears that they would try to kill her because of her drow heritage.

Despite the hostility and indifference of the beings who live in the Brettonwood, Lady Ugleranod is not alone. Her pure heart and her elven heritage have allowed her to win the support of the Black Unicorn, an exceptionally large and dark unicorn stallion. The Black Unicorn commands the respect of all the faerie creatures in the Brettonwood—including the firbolgs and the Noraldai.

The Firbolgs

The beings who are responsible for the nighttime "hauntings" at the fort live four miles northwest of the ruins. The firbolgs came to their present home (see area 14) a year ago, and although it is not as comfortable as their previous home, the giant-kin have found it to their liking.

The small firbolg clan is an extended family consisting of six members. Haughnir is the firbolg leader and main provider. He and his wife Lieulg have twin boys, Smeaghle and Feaghle. One of Haughnir's younger brothers, Grungle, has been tagging along with the family until he can find a mate, and the last firbolg, Naebulgh, is the grandfather of the clan.

Haughnir and his family were originally part of a larger tribe of firbolgs who lived in the wooded hills north of the Haunted Woods. When sightings of a green dragon began to occur in the area with increasing regularity, Lieulg pressured her husband into temporarily leaving the main tribe and moving south to where the threat of a dragon did not exist. Her main reason for concern was her children.

Because twins are extremely rare in firbolg society and are looked up on with special favor, it is likely that Smeaghle or Feaghle will one day become leaders of the firbolg tribe. The youngsters had streaks of curiosity a mile wide, and Lieulg didn't want to see her sons wander off one day and become dragon snacks.

Grungle had recently lost a chance at a mate, and he asked to join Haughnir and his family. Naebulgh—Grungle and Haughnir's aging father—was brought along at the last minute so that he could be a "good influence" on the twins.

Despite the twins' absence from the main clan, Haughnir and Lieulg feel that the boys will stand a reasonable chance to gain control of the firbolg clan upon returning to the main group. Trial by combat is not an uncommon way for firbolgs to determine a leader, and Haughnir knows that his quickly growing sons will become skilled warriors under his and Grungle's keen guidance.

After a weeklong journey, the firbolgs wandered into the western Brettonwood and found the perfect place to build a new home (see area 15). The ground was rich enough to support crops, plenty of animals lived in the nearby woods, and the forest provided an excellent environment for the two brothers to teach Haughnir's twins what they would need to know as adult firbolgs.

Four years pleasantly passed before the "dark witch" appeared. Naebulgh was the first to see her. During one of his many excursions on the river, the old giant saw a dark-skinned woman standing near the base of the southern river bluffs. When "Lady Ugly," as Naebulgh referred to her, saw the firbolg, she waved her arms about and flew up into the air. With a second gesture, the witch-woman disappeared, leaving Naebulgh full of dread.

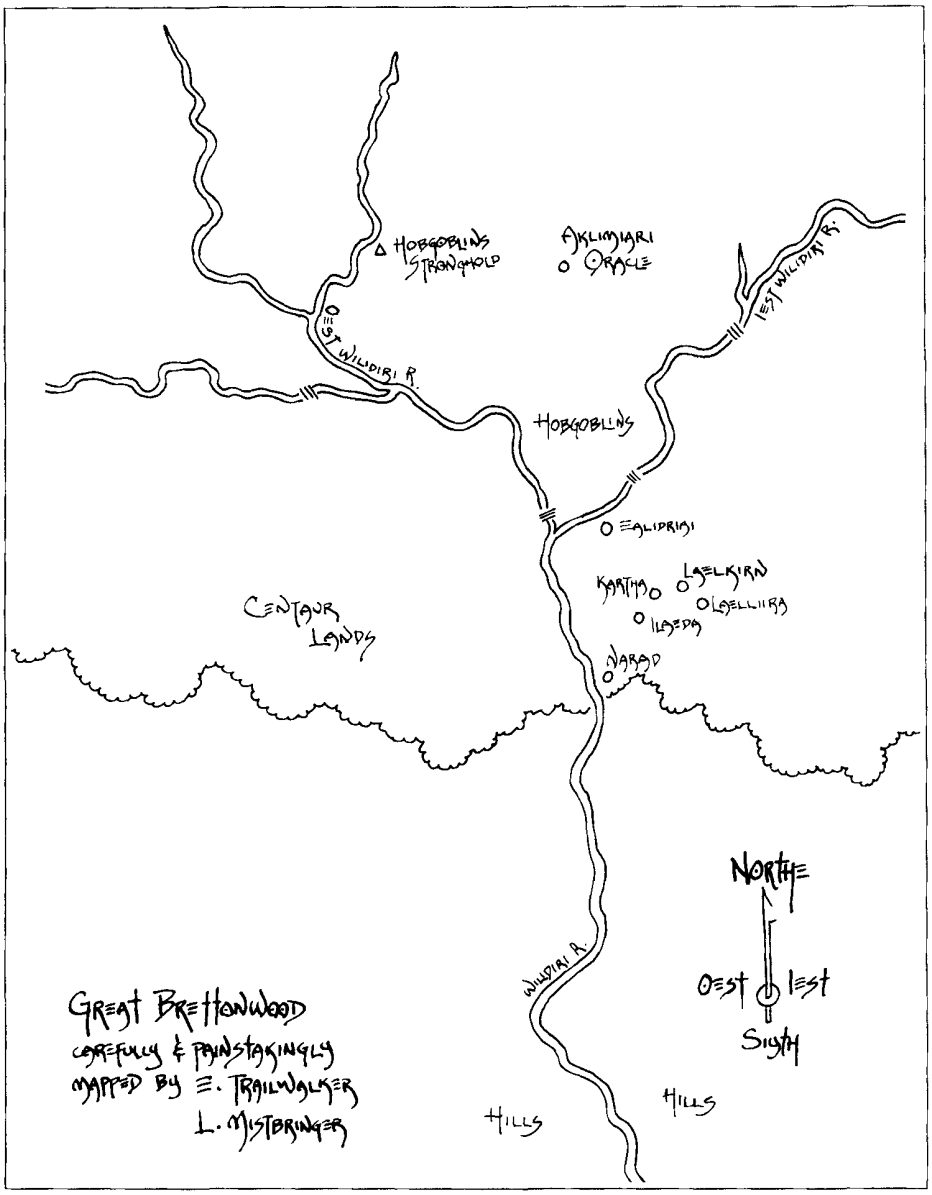
This turn of events was too much for Lieulg, who was deathly afraid that her sons might be kidnapped and sacrificed to some evil demon lord. Both Haughnir and Grungle tried to convince Lieulg that their father had only imagined the whole thing. But when Haughnir saw Lady Ugleranod for himself, he knew that his father was telling the truth. It was time to move the family again.

Currently the firbolgs enjoy the relative safety of their newest home (area 14), which sits atop a low hill. The twins have grown up enough to roam unsupervised through the woods, although they are expected to help with the destruction of the hobgoblin fort.

Removing the walls of the fort was Haughnir's idea, as he sees the crumbling stone construction as an ugly blot in an otherwise beautiful forest. The other adults are not as fanatical about the fort as Haughnir is, but they see the demolition of the fort as a way to score some brownie points with the protectors of the Brettonwood. While the giants do some of their demolition work during the day, a significant amount of it is done at night. The giants reason that they can more easily tend to domestic chores during the day (such as hunting, working the gardens, and making repairs on their house). They sleep during the late afternoon and evening before rising to work on the fort after full darkness. Haughnir calls this demolition a "character-building experience" for his twin sons, who don't always share their father's enthusiasm.

The firbolgs have very different feelings toward some of the beings who live within the forest. They are quite afraid of the "witch" Lady Ugleranod. Although the drow means no harm to the firbolgs, the giant-kin believe that she is after the twins for sacrifice in some horrible ceremony. Because of this, the firbolgs will be very suspicious of anything that she does until they are convinced otherwise.

The giant-kin are aware that the Noraldai live to the south, but they are unaware of the problems that their activity in the fort has caused the elves. The firbolgs tend to look at all human



and demihuman races as little giants who never quite grew up, and they will view the PCs and the Noraldai in the same way unless the PCs can change the firbolgs' minds.

The firbolgs have a great deal of respect for the woodlands, and they want to be on good terms with the treants. The firbolgs look at most faeries in the same way that humans look at songbirds, seeing them as cute and interesting little creatures. The opinions of the firbolgs differ concerning the Black Unicorn, however. Haughnir and Lieulg both find it a majestic beast of the wood. Grungle would love to try to tame it. The twins see the unicorn as a possible pet and have tried to capture it (though they never will). And Naebulgh, when he thinks about the unicorn, only wonders if it would make a good lunch.

The firbolgs are generally peaceful and are mainly concerned with protecting themselves (especially the twins). If the giant-kin are carefully approached by PCs who make them aware of the problems that the firbolgs have created, the firbolgs will be sympathetic. However, the firbolgs will continue to pull down the fort unless a viable solution to the problem is presented. See area 14 and "Halting the Bumps in the Night" for more information.

Beginning the Adventure

The PCs' first become involved with events occurring in the Brettonwood when they meet messengers from the Noraldai clan. This encounter can occur on a road near the Brettonwood or in a small town nearby. The DM™ should utilize whichever opening scenario seems most likely to draw the PCs into the adventure. If the PCs are between adventures, the town scenario may be preferable; if the PCs are aimlessly wandering in search of adventure, use the road scenario.

If the PCs are visiting a small town within two days' journey of the Brettonwood, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

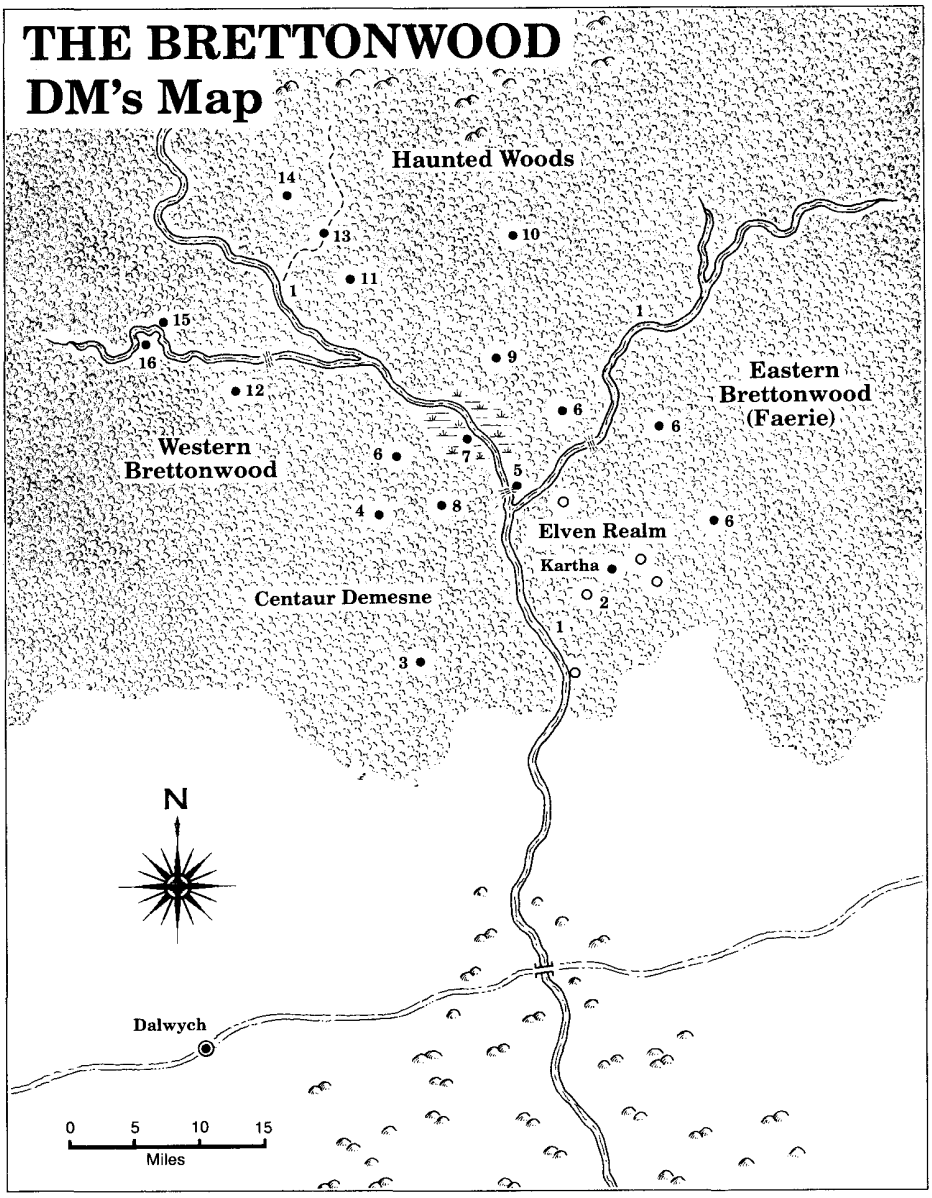
> The late morning sun streams in the wide bay window of the Steaming Cauldron Inn as you partake of a late breakfast. Having completed your latest adventure a few days ago, the small town of Dalwych seemed like the perfect place to rest for a short time. No sleeping outside on the cold hard ground, no waking from a sound sleep to meet nighttime wanderers, no dungeon-crawling for days on end. The respite from adventuring has been more than welcome.
>
> As you try to fill your hungry stomachs, three unusual travelers enter the warm inn. Their faces bear expressions of confusion and embarrassment, almost as if they have never been in an inn before. A second look reveals the three to be elves, but stocky ones not possessing the slight build common to most elves. The newcomers are dressed in dark colors—muted greens and browns—and the beautiful long bows carefully slung over their right shoulders imply that they are good archers.
>
> Two of the elves nervously look at each other while the third surveys the patrons in the inn's common room. After speaking a few words to his companions, the third elf strides cautiously over to your table. He looks at you with anticipation as a shy smile appears on his face.

If the PCs are on a road near the edge of the Brettonwood, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The dirt road that you have traveled for the last few days has not been one of the more memorable parts of your trip. Covered with ruts, potholes, and occasional piles of debris, it has caused more problems for your mounts than you believed possible. In fact, you think that you might have been better off cutting across the plain instead of following this sorry excuse for a road. The road leads to the town of Dalwych, and there you hope to find news of an adventure worthy of your attention.

The low rolling hills stretch out across the horizon south of you, obscuring the sight of Dalwych to the west. The view to the north is quite different; the great green expanse that covers most of the horizon marks the edge of the Brettonwood, an ancient forest. None of you know a great deal about it, although you've heard rumors that faeries live there. If worst comes to worst, maybe the faeries can provide a suitable challenge for your adventuring skills.

As you come over the crest of the hill, you notice three travelers along the side of the road. They seem to be arguing about something, and their words, while not understandable, seem familiar. A second look reveals the three to be elves or half-elves. However, they possess a shorter and stockier build than most of the elves that you've seen. The travelers are clad in a variety of mottled green and brown clothing, which seems more suited for a wilderness foray than a road journey. At your approach, the three cease their argument, and one walks toward you with a nervous smile on his face.



In either scenario, once the PCs have acknowledged the presence of the elf, he begins to speak to them in a slow, lilting voice. It is obvious at first that the elf is nervous, but as he continues to talk to the PCs, his confidence improves.

"Greetings, ah . . . I, Kudic Mistwalker, son of Daybringer, bring you greetings from my lord, Arias Goldbrow, son of Silverbrow. Ah . . . my two companions"—here the elf motions toward the pair of warriors who are trying not to stare at you—"and I have traveled many miles to bring you news of a great offer . . . an offer worthy of adventurers such as yourselves!"

As the elf overcomes his initial nervousness, his manners become bolder and more dignified. "The arms that you carry reveal your prowess as warriors and practitioners of magic. That is good. My tribe is in desperate need of brave, skilled adventurers such as yourselves, for we have been plagued by a serious problem. My lord has advised me to inform you, as potential candidates for this offer of employment, that we are prepared to richly reward you! It is even possible that you may receive . . . well, I am getting ahead of myself."

Kudic's eyes dance as he looks all of you over. It seems obvious that he is trying to find any sparks of interest that flicker in your adventuresome souls. "We are but three of many messengers from my tribe, and we would be greatly honored if you would accompany us back to Kartha,

our home. I myself do not know exactly what deeds my lord Arias Goldbrow wishes you to undertake, but I do know this: Your aid will save our tribe, and the elders might see fit for you to receive elven armor as a token of our gratitude. Please follow us back to Kartha. Everything will be explained in full detail there, and I'm certain that you will find our humble request to your liking."

Kudic will try anything to convince the PCs to journey back to Kartha with him. If necessary, he will play up the possibility of elven chain mail being included in the reward in order to get the PCs to go to Kartha. If asked who his companions are, Kudic introduces the other two elves, Loras Ravensong and Sendal Moonwhisper. He is obviously embarrassed at having forgotten to do so before.

The trip to Kartha, whether it originates from Dalwych or somewhere on the road, is uneventful unless the DM desires otherwise. When the group reaches the edge of the forest, the elves blindfold the PCs before escorting them to Kartha. Kudic explains to the PCs that the blindfolds are a necessary precaution. "We Noraldai must keep the true location of our villages a secret, or we may be attacked by evil again," Kudic tells the PCs, referring to the old elf-hobgoblin war. If the PCs object, he apologizes for the elves' mistrust, but he insists on the necessity of blindfolds.

Kudic Mistwalker: AL N; AC 3; MV 12; F4; hp 31; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 to hit with sword or bow; S 17, D 15; ML 13; elven chain mail, shield, long sword, long bow.

Kudic is primarily interested in convincing the PCs to undertake the mission on behalf of the Noraldai, as he is loyal to his clan. He is very nervous in dealing with the PCs, but he will try not to let it show. However, Kudic will almost always speak to elven PCs before addressing anyone else.

Loras Ravensong and **Sendal Moonwhisper:** AL N; AC 5; MV 12; F2; hp 16, 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 to hit with sword or bow; S 16, D 16; leather armor, shield, long sword, long bow.

Loras is very intimidated by the PCs, but he will not let that interfere with his mission of protecting Kudic. He answers questions monosyllabically,

Forest Encounters

01-08 **Ghostwood.** As the PCs travel through the woods, they accidentally pass beneath the boughs of a ghostwood tree. Unless the adventurers have encountered ghostwoods before and are actively attempting to avoid them, 1-3 random PCs or NPCs will pass through the area affected by the ghostwood. PCs who are keeping an eye out for ghostwood trees will notice their presence if a successful herbalism or plant lore check (see *WSG*, page 15), or Intelligence check on 1d20 (at a penalty of +5 to the roll) is made. A saving throw vs. spells, with a +2 modifier, must be made by any individual who passes beneath the ghostwoods. Those who succeed experience a tiredness that lasts but 1-3 rounds. Failure indicates that the victim has fallen under the influence of the ghostwood trees. See "Notes on the Brettonwood" for more information.

09-15 **Fire beetles** (2-8): INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ S; ML 12; XP 35; MC2. These insects attack only at night. If this encounter occurs during daylight hours, treat it as no encounter.

16-20 **Giant stag:** INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 21; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 4-16 or 1-4/1-4; SZ L; ML 11; XP 175; MC4. This majestic creature will ignore the PCs unless they attack it, whereupon it will attempt to flee. If cornered or harried by dogs, the stag will fight back viciously.

21-32 **Noises.** These unusually loud or startling noises are transmitted to the PCs' location by thrumwood trees. The actual noise heard is left up to the DM; possibilities include falling stones and deep, low laughter (stones being pulled down by the firbolgs), the snarls of some woodland predator, the squawk of a bird, or sudden giggles from faeries. It is 5% likely that the sound has been emitted in such a manner as to create a sound channel (see "Notes on The Brettonwood").

33-41 **Wood spirits.** These magical beings are insubstantial and invisible to the PCs. An encounter with them begins when party members hear faint voices. A sudden breeze sweeps through the party as the spirits fly past, and the PCs hear tinny, high-pitched laughter. After 2-5 segments, the spirits leave the PCs, who should be unable to harm or communicate with the wood spirits in any manner.

42-47 **Goblins** (11-14): INT low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1−1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ S; ML 8; XP 15; MC1. This band of humanoids originally entered the Brettonwood to plunder it, but the goblins are now lost and scared. They will attempt to ambush the PCs with their bows, but if 50% or more of them are slain or incapacitated, the others will surrender. Each goblin has 1-6 sp and 1-6 cp.

48-50 **The Black Unicorn.** This creature is the most majestic and awe-inspiring beast in all of the Brettonwood. It is similar in appearance to a normal unicorn, but its coat is a rich blue-black color. The PCs will get no more than a glimpse of the great beast unless they have harmed Lady Ugleranod. If this has already happened, the unicorn charges the PCs and attempts to slay those responsible. (See area 16 for more information and statistics.)

51-59 **Large spiders** (1-6): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; ML 7; XP 175; MC1. These angry spiders attack as the adventurers pass beneath the arachnids' trees. The spiders silently descend on their threadlines to attack the PCs. If a PC makes an Alertness check (see the *Complete Thief's Handbook*, page 16), this ploy may not be successful; otherwise, subtract 2 from the PC's surprise roll. If the PCs climb the trees to search for the spider lair, they will meet 0-3 more large spiders who guard the webs in the trees. There is a 10% chance that the spiders have incidental treasure of 5-50 gp, 5-50 sp, and 5-50 cp.

60-65 **Pixies** (2-5): INT exceptional; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, fly 12 (B); HD ½; hp 3 each; THAC0 20 (16); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells, touch causes *confusion*; SD *invisibility;* MR 25%; SZ S; ML 11; MC2. These faeries follow the PCs for 1-4 hours, playing tricks on them all the while. Possible pixie pranks include untying PCs' backpack straps or sword belts, stealing small items, creating illusory threats (trees with menacing faces that talk, growls and baleful pairs of glowing eyes that surround the party, etc.), throwing acorns at their heads, and the like. If the PCs manage to attack the pixies, the pixies fire on the entire party with *sleep* arrows. If harsher steps are necessary, the pixies attack the PCs with deadly illusions of evil creatures or with memory-loss arrows.

PCs who are able to take the faeries' pranks in stride and with good-humor will be rewarded. The pixies become visible and give the PCs one item. Roll 1d10 to see what the PCs receive: 1) a pinch of pixie dust (treat as *dust of disappearance*; 2-4) a juicy, perfect fruit; 5-8) pretty flowers; 9) a sack containing 10 gp; 10) a scroll case containing a priest scroll of *cure serious wounds*. No matter how often pixies are encountered, only one scroll will be given to the PCs.

66-73 **Wolf pack** (3-9 wolves): INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SZ S; ML 10; XP 65; MC1. These creatures roam the Brettonwood in search of easy prey. They will not bother the PCs unless the adventurers are either wounded or outnumbered. If the wolves do attack, they trail the adventurers and wait until nightfall to make their move. The loss of 50% of the wolfpack will send the remaining wolves elsewhere to find prey.

74-77 **Treant:** INT very; AL CG; AC 0; MV 12; HD 8; hp 42; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16; SA animate trees; SD never surprised; SZ H; ML 15; MC1. The PCs wander into a small grove that is under the protection of a young treant. The treant acts as a watchdog for trouble in his area of the wood, and it will report any strange goings-on to Clement (see area 9) if the need arises. The treant will be very suspicious of anyone using fire or axes, and only a generous show of respect will appease the treant thereafter. If it is concerned about the PCs' motives in the Brettonwood, the treant will ask local creatures to keep an eye on the outsiders. Consequently, the frequency of encounter checks for the next two days is doubled, and the PCs will have a strange feeling that they are being watched. A treant is a good source of information about the Brettonwood; if befriended, it will be 50% likely to answer simple questions about the wood and its history.

78-86 **Giant centipedes** (3-30): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 15; HD ¼; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poison; SZ T; ML 6; XP 35; MC1. The adventurers find a very large, hollowed-out tree that has fallen over. Anyone approaching within 5′ of the tree will be attacked by the hordes of giant centipedes that lair within the trunk.

87-91 **Firbolg twins.** Smeaghle and Feaghle are currently roaming the woods in search of some goblins who shot arrows at them earlier. They have used their *alter self* ability to appear as elves in order to avoid bothering other forest inhabitants and to draw the goblins into attacking them when they are found. If the firbolg twins speak with the PCs, they will be friendly and ask about goblins often. However, something about these "elves" will be not quite right, as each carries a 9′-long two-handed sword, and they elbow each other and snicker constantly. Any PCs who follow the "elves" after taking leave of their presence will see one of them assume the form of a 12′-tall humanlike creature just before the two beings burst out laughing. (See area 14 for statistics.)

92-96 **Elven cats** (1-3): INT low; AL N; AC 4; MV 18; HD 3+6; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA/SD surprised only on 1; spell-like abilities as 9th-level caster: *ESP, pass without trace; enlarge* or *trip* (once/day); *reduce* or *tree* (twice/day); MR 20%; SZ T; ML 14; MC11 (Cat, elven). These animals, pets of the Noraldai, are allowed to roam the forest at will. The cats ignore the adventurers unless the PCs attack or an elf approaches them. If approached by elves, the cats playfully romp closer and purr loudly, expecting to be petted, played with, or fed. If the PCs slay any elven cats and the Noraldai find out about it, Arias Goldbrow may refuse to give the PCs some or all of their payment (DM's discretion).

97-00 **Faerie meadow.** The PCs come across a small glen that serves as a gathering place for faeries. Nothing unusual will be found during the day, but at night dozens of forest beings meet for a festival of songs, dancing, and food. At any such festival, there will be 1-3 satyrs (one of whom will be a piper), 10-40 atomies, 2-20 wood spirits (see above), 10-40 sprites, and 1-6 brownies or 1-6 leprechauns. The noise from the gathering is audible up to 200 yards away, giving inquisitive PCs the opportunity to sneak up and observe the proceedings. Anyone who boldly walks into the clearing during a festival will be welcomed by the faeries; however, he or she will be forced to dance throughout the night. This dancing results in the loss of 1-4 hp, and the PC will be relieved of 1-10 small items by the faeries during the night. If the faeries are attacked, or if PCs in hiding are spotted (10% cumulative chance per turn), the glen is plunged into darkness and all of the faeries flee, not to return until the next night.

and only a PC elf has a chance to hold a conversation with him.

Sendal is also intimidated by the PCs, but he tries to put on a stern exterior to hide his weakness. He is also charged with protecting Kudic, and he will be suspicious of anyone who threatens Kudic or acts in a hostile manner.

Inside Kartha

The adventurers reach Kartha after a two-hour walk. Their blindfolds are removed, and they are escorted up a stairwell inside a great oak tree to the presence of Arias Goldbrow. Arias's audience chamber is a series of ornate platforms supported by the oak tree and hidden from the ground by thick foliage. The elf leader does not sit on a throne in the audience hall; instead, the PCs must sit on the floor while Arias stands before them. This is done more out of necessity than tradition. Not only would a bulky throne be impractical, but the platforms of the elven village are unable to support such a large piece of furniture.

Once the PCs have been introduced to the warrior chief and have been allowed to sit down in the audience hall, Arias tries to enlist them to find the source of the Noraldai's problems. The elf tells the PCs the story of the elf-hobgoblin war and then describes the strange noises that tribe members have heard in the Brettonwood. He also reveals the clerics' fear that the hobgoblins might have returned as undead spirits. Arias Goldbrow will assume that the PCs already understand the problem plaguing his tribe, and he will give the PCs only general information unless they ask specific questions.

"My new acquaintances," the old elf begins quietly. "I am pleased to learn that you may be willing to help us. We Noraldai are a proud people with a beautiful history, and we now face a threat that, if left unchecked, may force us to leave the Brettonwood or perish. Since we will not consider the former, your aid will be most appreciated."

Pausing to stroke one of the many cats in the open chamber, the elven leader stops and looks at all of you. "We had a war with the hobgoblins once, before my birth. The conflict was savage and damaged the forest and our tribe gravely. Only the great swordsmanship of Arahala Sorentia

saved us from their grotesque parody of a lord. Ah, what a wondrous lady she must have been.

"The hobgoblins' evil band was totally destroyed at the conclusion of the conflict, and we have regarded their accursed land as taboo. None of the Noraldai will ever visit the source of the hobgoblins' evil again. Unfortunately for my people, the hobgoblin threat has returned—but from beyond their most cursed graves."

Arias pauses for a long time, stroking another of the plentiful cats as he stares off into space. Without warning, he speaks again.

"Strange things have been going on in the woods at the ruins of the old hobgoblin fort. We hear eerie noises, loud crashes, and wicked, evil laughter. Three brave centaurs volunteered to scout the region for us, but alas, they have been missing for more than a fortnight.

"I fear that the hobgoblins' spirits have arisen to exact their vengeance on us. My priests feel likewise, but they do not have the power to protect our entire tribe from an undead host. As outsiders, and obviously powerful ones, you represent our greatest hope. What we require of you is this: Travel to the ruined hobgoblin fort and determine who or what is causing the noises, and if an attack is imminent. Use any means necessary to ensure that whatever is haunting the ruins ceases to do so."

Arias lapses into silence once more, but he pauses only briefly before beginning again.

"On the matter of payment or reward . . . . We Noraldai are skilled silverworkers, and we will offer you ten pieces of our own crafting. We also know much of the special plants of the Brettonwood, and we can offer magical elixirs brewed from these plants as well. If you prefer payment in gold, that is a possibility too. Finally, the council has decided that since this is an important task, we will offer one suit of elven chain mail to your group. You are free to choose any three of these payments. Is this acceptable?"

Arias Goldbrow is not going to be pleased if the outsiders try to haggle with him. The offered lots are:

— 10 pieces of jewelry (each worth 10-40 gp)

— Any three elixirs from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* with values less than 300 XP each (however, these potions spoil in 2-4 weeks due to their organic nature)

— 400 gp

— One suit of elven chain mail

If pressed, Arias will offer up to five more pieces of jewelry, one extra potion, or 100 gp more. However, he will be visibly angered by what he perceives as the outsiders' extreme presumptuousness. He refuses to offer more than one suit of elven chain mail, and an attempt to buy a suit will affront Arias and any other elves in the chamber. Elven chain mail is a gift, not a commodity to be bought and sold!

Once the PCs and Arias have agreed on the terms of the mission, one of the tribal clerics appear, a scroll case held in his hands. Inside the case is a map of part of the Brettonwood (see the Players' Map).

If the PCs have not angered or insulted Arias during their conversation, the elven chief presents the party leader with a simple silver signet ring engraved with the elven letter "N." Arias tells the PCs that the ring is proof to other inhabitants of the forest that the adventurers are friends of the Noraldai. Arias asks that the map be returned to him if the PCs successfully complete their mission. He will pay no reward unless the map is returned.

The map that the PCs receive was made from a 500-year-old original. Consequently, parts of it are inaccurate. The greatest inaccuracies occur in the Haunted Woods area of the map where the hobgoblin fort lies. No Noraldai have visit the area since the final battle 800 years ago, and the true locations of various sites is guesswork.

Arias Goldbrow: AL N; AC 3; MV 12; F8/M9; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 18/26, D 15, C 14, I 17, W 13, Ch 15; ML 13; elven chain mail, *long sword +1*, long bow, *ring of protection +1*. Spells: *dancing lights, phantasmal force, spook, wall of fog; ESP, strength, web; blink, lightning bolt, phantom steed; hallucinatory terrain, minor globe of invulnerability; cloudkill.*

Arias Goldbrow is not concerned with who solves the problem for the Noraldai, but rather that the problem is solved. He has already hired other adventuring groups to investigate the hobgoblin fort, and he plans to reward only the first group to return with proof of success. Arias treats the party in a slightly condescending manner and answers their questions impatiently. His manners will improve if the majority of the PCs are elves, if a PC is a ranger or a druid, or a PC possesses appreciable artistic talent.

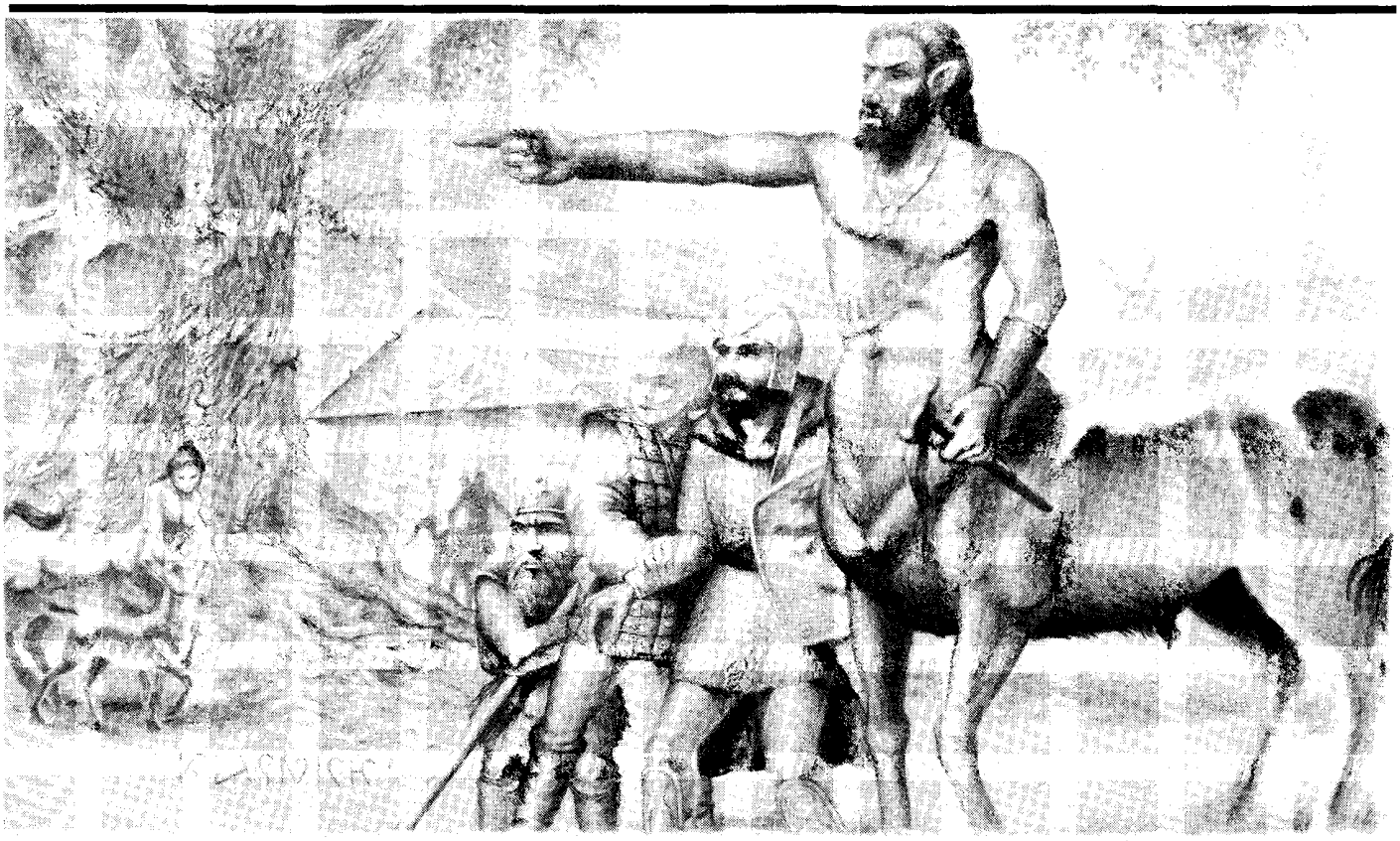
Into the Brettonwood

Before the PCs embark on their journey, the Noraldai allow them time to prepare any necessary equipment or spells. The wood elves also allow the PCs to trade or barter for common pieces of equipment such as sacks, leather armor, rations, etc. No magical items or suits of elven chain mail will be loaned to the adventurers; Arias Goldbrow does not trust the outsiders. Besides, if he supplied one group of adventurers with equipment, Arias would feel obligated to do the same for any other groups that he might hire.

When the PCs are ready to leave Kartha, the elves blindfold them again and lead them by a roundabout route to a grove three miles to the west. Arias tells the PCs that if they complete the mission they are to return to the grove and not to try to find the village. Once a day at noon, an elven patrol will check the grove to see if the PCs (or any of the other adventurers sent out) have returned. If the adventurers are present, the elves blindfold them again and take them back to Kartha by the same route.

While the Brettonwood is not an overly hostile environment for those who respect it, many creatures dwell within it, and there is a good chance that the PCs will meet some of them. For every eight hours that the PCs are in the forest itself (any area that does not contain a permanent encounter), roll 1d6. On a roll of 1, consult the "Forest Encounters" sidebar to determine who or what the adventurers have met.

1. River Wilidiri. This crystal-clear river snakes its way through the heart of the Brettonwood, cleanly dividing the forest into three realms. To the east live the majority of the forest's faerie beings and the Noraldai. The west is the home of the centaurs and normal woodland creatures. To the north is the Haunted Wood, the untamed Brettonwood that the Noraldai remember little about.



The River Wilidiri ranges between 20′ and 60′ wide (the wider sections are in the southern regions). The Wilidiri is not a swift river, but it is rather deep. There is only a 10% chance of finding a ford, other than the three known ones, in any given river hex. If the PCs travel on the river at night or camp within a mile of the Wilidiri, it is 20% likely that they will hear the eerie laughter and other noises that the Noraldai described to them. Sometimes the sounds seem to emanate from a great distance away. The next moment the source of the disturbance seems only yards away. The noises are a result of the firbolgs' activity at the hobgoblin fort (area 13) and are channeled to the PCs by thrumwood trees.

If the PCs try to fish in the Wilidiri, they will find it easy (subtract 2 from any fishing proficiency checks). If too much time is spent in any one part of the river (at least eight hours) or a fishing proficiency check results in a natural 19 or 20, a hungry giant crayfish is attracted to the PCs' presence and attacks.

Giant crayfish: INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, swim 12; HD 4+4; hp 28; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12/2-12; SD surprise; SZ L; ML 13; XP 125; MC2 (Crustacean).

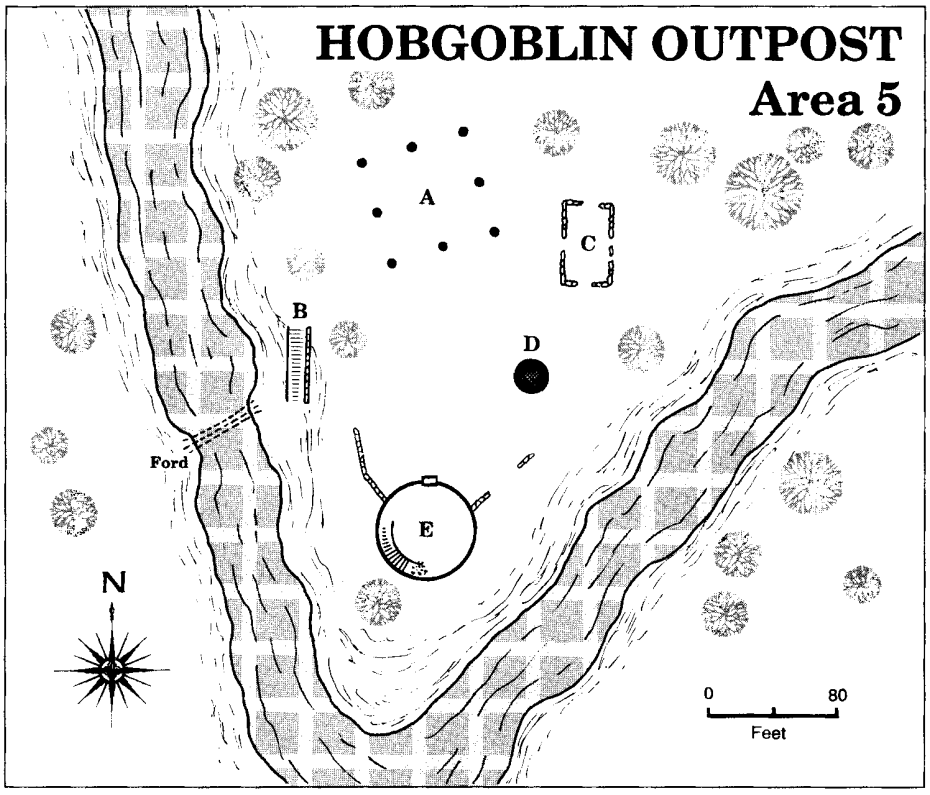
2. Noraldai Villages. The wood elves' realm is a roughly circular area, about 12 miles across and just east of the Wilidiri. Six Noraldai villages are hidden in this area, each at least 30′ above the forest floor and camouflaged by layers of tree foliage. Kartha is the largest and central village. The other villages, in clockwise order from the southwest, are Narad, Ealidriai, Laelkirin, Laelliira, and Ilaeda. The only way to enter a village is by magical means or by stairwells hidden in the great trees of the forest. These entrances are well hidden, as non-Noraldai have only a 1-in-6 chance of finding the mechanism to gain entrance to the heart of a tree. Careful craftsmanship and judicious use of magic allowed the Noraldai to carve these hidden stairwells without killing the trees that contain them.

A party of adventurers has only a 5% chance to notice a village when passing beneath it. If the PCs are actively searching for a village, the chance of noticing one improves to 10%. During the time that the PCs are in the area of the Noraldai villages, 30% of random encounters will be with an elven guard force (eight 2nd-level fighters, two 3rd-level fighter/mages, and a 5th-level fighter/mage leader). Unless the PCs show the patrol one of Arias's rings, the elves ask the intruders to leave the elven lands.

3. Centaur Demesne. This series of beautiful open meadows and shadowy glens is home to a tribe of 150 centaurs. Here they live as they have for centuries. If the PCs manage to reach the meadows without a centaur escort, they are spotted and approached by a group of 1d6+5 male centaurs, all armed with staves and short bows.

The centaurs' initial reaction to intruders will be unfavorable, but if at least one of the PCs is elven and the PC have one of the elven rings, the centaurs may be friendlier. Unless the PCs are able to impress the centaurs through respectful manners or a few small gifts, the centaurs firmly ask the adventurers to leave. Those who make a good impression on the centaurs are allowed to speak with Ceodrua, the centaur chief.

Ceodrua is gruff and temperamental, but he can impart some information about the Brettonwood to the PCs. He doesn't know much about the elf-



hobgoblin war, but he can direct the PCs to someone who does (Clement, at area 9). Ceodrua can expound a little on the Noraldai and their habits to the PCs; he sees them as a haughty but basically decent people. He thinks their concern for the elven cats is absurd.

If asked about strange noises in the wood, the centaur leader tells the PCs that his tribe has indeed heard them, but that they are unconcerned. What bothers Ceodrua more is that three centaur warriors offered to scout the hobgoblin fort as a favor to the Noraldai, but none of them have returned.

Ceodrua understands the nature of both thrumwood and ghostwood trees, and he may warn the PCs about the will-o-wisp in the marsh (area 7).

Ceodrua: INT average; AL N; AC 4; MV 18; HD 4; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/by weapon type +1; SZ L; ML 14; MC1.

Centaurs (60 male): INT low; AC 5; hp 20 each; ML 13; other statistics as for Ceodrua (above).

4. The Talking Owl. The adventurers suddenly hear a loud squawking coming from behind a nearby bush. If the PCs investigate, they find an owl lying on the ground, beating one wing feebly against the soil and moss of the forest floor.

The owl is not injured at all. Rather, it has been observing the PCs for some time, and it is trying to determine if the unknown humans and demihumans are friendly. If the PCs attempt to heal the owl or to bind its "broken" wing, the owl, whose name is Klaussen, will address the PCs in the Common tongue.

Klaussen is a talking owl, one of the rarest magical creatures of the forest—and he knows it. If the PCs befriend Klaussen, he will be willing to join them and show the adventurers around "his" forest. The owl is more than talkative; if not constantly reminded by the PCs to keep his beak shut, Klaussen will tell the PCs about everything and anything, including where he caught his last mouse for lunch. Use Klaussen for comic relief, but remember that the owl's presence is useful to the PCs as well. Many of the Brettonwood creatures will treat the PCs more favorably and will cooperate more willingly if the owl is with the party.

Klaussen even has a stash of treasure and baubles. If asked about it, the owl is more than willing to show his new friends the pretty things that he has accumulated. The owl's trove amounts to 24 gp, 69 sp, 9 cp, a polished mirror, several pretty rocks, three 10-gp gems, and a *dagger +1*. Klaussen will trade the dagger for a reasonable amount of shiny coins and gems, as he has no use for the weapon.

Klaussen, talking owl: INT 15; AL LG; AC 3; MV 1, fly 36 (C); HD 2+2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-2; SA swoop; SD never surprised; MR spell immunities due to high wisdom; SZ S (6′ wingspan); ML 15; MC1.

Despite the owl's apparent foolishness, he is one of the protectors of the Brettonwood and will actively take steps to defend the forest. Klaussen is on good terms with Clement (area 9), and he often visits the old treant.

5. Hobgoblin Outpost. At the southernmost fork in the River Wilidiri lies the centuries-old ruin of an outpost maintained by Drabkk's hobgoblin servants. During the elf-hobgoblin war, the outpost was used as a place to launch raids and spy on the elves. It has not weathered the tests of time well. Since the outpost was hastily built, much of it has fallen apart, crumbled away, or been removed by the inhabitants of the Brettonwood.

Although much of the ruins are obscured by foliage, the signal tower (5E) can still be seen by approaching adventurers, as the land north of the fork in the river is 30′ higher than the surrounding countryside.

There is one ford in the Wilidiri at this location, just south of the stairs beside the eastern fork of the river near area 5B. Elsewhere, the Wilidiri is between 9′ and 16′ deep near its middle, making crossings difficult without a boat or flat raft.

5A. Old Animal Pen. This area, defined by the eight stake holes shown on the map, was used as a holding area for horses and animals that would eventually end up in the goblins' stewpot. The wooden pen has long since rotted away. Adventurers finding the holes can only guess at their original purpose.

5B. Stone Stairs. These still-usable stairs allowed the hobgoblins to safely reach the river from the plateau where the outpost stood, 30′ above the river. If

the stairs are carefully searched, a loose stone can be removed to reveal a small niche. Inside the niche is a long-lost treasure hidden by a desperate hobgoblin: a small lacquered cedar box containing 60 sp and 40 gp.

5C. Bunkhouse. Other than the tower, this ancient building is the only stone structure that remains intact. Several similar buildings used to stand to the north and east of this one, but they have all been destroyed by nature and curious Brettonwood inhabitants. The ceiling has partially collapsed, choking the floor with rubble. Anyone who spends a turn sifting through the rubble will find the skeletons of two hobgoblins slain during the fall of the outpost. The two skeletons lie atop a jumble of coins: 46 sp in all.

5D. Garbage Pit. This stone-rimmed hole in the ground was used as a disposal pit by the hobgoblins. After Drabkk was killed and the hobgoblins were routed by the elves, a large group of hobgoblin warriors retreated to the outpost in an attempt to defend it from the advancing Noraldai. Their attempt was unsuccessful, and the hobgoblins were forced to retreat again. Before the hobgoblins fled the outpost, they threw the body of their leader into the disposal pit so that the elves could not find and defile his corpse.

This unholy burial, combined with the might and willpower of Drabkk's evil spirit, allowed him to return to unlife as a wight. Drabkk currently sits in his "throne room" in the tower (area 5E), scheming to someday destroy the elves in revenge for his defeat.

If the pit is searched, each searcher has a 10% chance to contract an acute parasitic disease. One treasure remains in the pit: Drabkk's old scepter of office. Drabkk has searched for it ever since he became a wight, but he has been unable to find it. The scepter appears to be a light wooden staff with a few ornamental gems, but it can function as a *staff of withering* four more times before its magic dissipates. Drabkk received the staff as payment from an evil wizard a long time ago in return for the services of his tribe.

5E. Outpost Tower. This crumbling two-story edifice allowed the hobgoblins an excellent view of the Brettonwood back when the forest was young. Now it sits as a sad legacy of Drabkk's once-mighty hobgoblin army. Anyone attempting to climb the tower walls to the roof is in for a surprise, as the wooden floorboards are very rotten. Any weight over 50 lbs. will cause them to collapse, dropping the victim 20' to the second floor for 2-12 hp damage. The second floor is rotten as well; anyone walking (or falling) on it has a 40% chance per round of stepping through a weak area and falling to the first floor for 2-12 hp damage.

The only entrance to the tower, aside from the roof, is a small iron-bound door on the northern side of the tower. The wood has swollen over the years, making the door difficult to open. All rolls to open the door are halved (round up), and a failed attempt will alert the beings inside the tower.

Drabkk, now a wight, waits inside to vent his fury on those of the living world. Drabkk is not alone; with him are two lesser wights, humans that Drabkk ambushed and slew within the last two years. One of the lesser wights was a member of a previous group sent out by the elves (see area 12). Frederick was originally a cleric, and since he was slain only two weeks ago, he prefers to wear armor and attack with a mace instead of using his life-draining powers. The other lesser wight, Berecaud, was a brigand who left his companions in the forest. Berecaud found the outpost and thought it was a relatively safe place to spend the night—a mistake that proved to be fatal.

Drabkk is the most dangerous of the three wights. While his body is not as magnificently huge as it once was, Drabkk is still a gargantuan specimen of a hobgoblin. He has retained his gruesome habit of biting opponents during battle. If Drabkk resorts to this tactic and hits a foe, he continues to bite his victim and drain an energy level each round until his opponent frees himself. Breaking free can be done by stating the intention to do so and successfully rolling to hit against the wight.

Drabkk, wight: INT average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA energy drain, continuous drain; SD silver or magical weapon to hit; MR special; SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400; MC1.

Frederick, wight: INT average; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 2+2; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (mace); SA no energy drain unless disarmed; SD silver or magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 14; XP 420; MC1; chain mail, shield, mace.

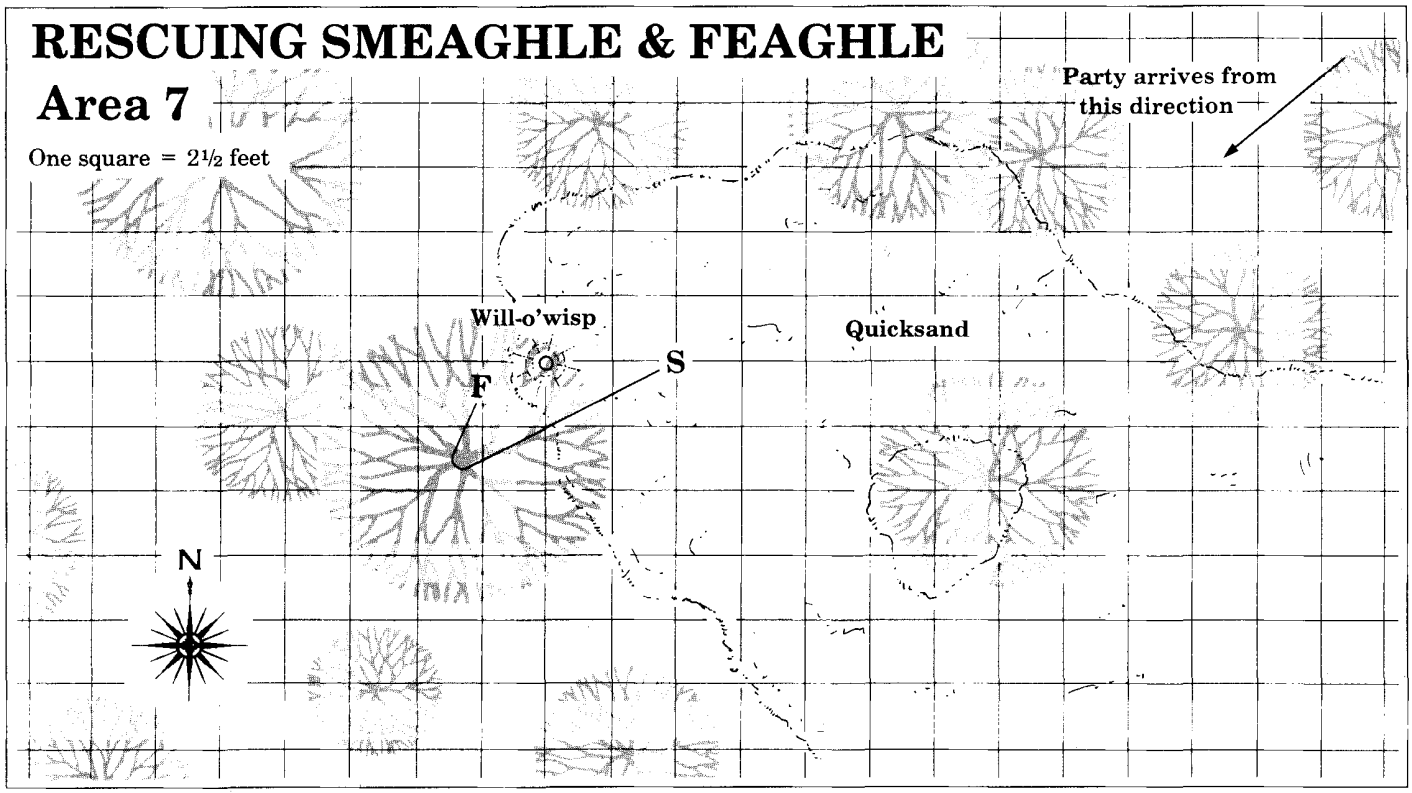
Berecaud, wight: INT average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA energy drain; SD silver or magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 14; XP 420; MC1.

A locked chest in the tower serves a dual purpose as Drabkk's throne and treasure chest. Inside are 250 gp, 600 sp, 12 gems worth 10-20 gp each, and a potion of *clairaudience*. Drabkk still wears much of his personal finery. While his tattered robe and cloak are valueless, he has an assortment of necklaces, brooches, and rings worth 420 gp as a set. One of the rings is a *ring of shielding* (acts as a *brooch of shielding*) with 29 charges left. Finally, Drabkk has a rusty keychain with seven keys on it; the keys open the chests in the hobgoblin treasure room in the fort's dungeon (area 13, room N8).

The presence of the undead may cause the PCs to think that the outpost is really the fort. If they try to return to the Noraldai and claim the reward, Arias will inform them of their error and that the noises have not ceased. News of Drabkk's final defeat will please Arias, but he will not give the PCs a greater reward for their deed.

6. Pixie Tricks. These areas of the forest are home to small bands of pixies. These faeries will notice and follow any foreigners passing through their trees, as they are curious about anything new and strange. Soon, their curiosity will wear off, and the pixies will begin playing pranks on the PCs.

The pixies may use one of the following tricks, or they may do whatever the DM feels is appropriate. One trick is to create the illusion that a huge beast is following the adventurers, and that it will soon attack. At night, the pixies may create many pairs of red-rimmed or ghostly eyes to surround and frighten the party. The pixies may even pretend to be "ghosts of the Brettonwood" that must be appeased with treasure or the adventurers will be cursed. The pixies will bother the PCs until they are appeased with a bribe. For more ideas on pixie pranks, see the "Forest Encounters" sidebar.



Pixies (15): INT exceptional; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, fly 12; HD ½; hp 3 each; THAC0 20 (16); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA special; SD *invisibility,* spells; MR 25%; SZ S; ML 11; MC2.

7. Will O'Wisp Marsh. At this juncture of the River Wilidiri, the surrounding land has never drained well. Consequently, a small marsh has formed here, and it can be hazardous to unwary adventurers. Much of the silt and mud from the riverbanks has the consistency of quicksand, and it is 10% likely that a random PC will find himself entrapped for every turn that the adventurers are in the marsh. For more information on the effects of quicksand, consult page 83 of the *Wilderness Survival Guide.*

The marsh is home to an incredibly ancient will o'wisp, one that has lived in the Brettonwood for over 600 years. The 'wisp is used to feeding on small animals, but it will not pass up an opportunity to feed on humans or demihumans who enter the marsh. It tries to lure prey deep into the swamp; if any thrumwood trees happen to release a captured sound (there are several groups of thrumwoods in the marshland), the 'wisp dances in the direction of the noise. Otherwise, the will o'wisp leads the party into a quicksand pit or to a cluster of ghostwood trees (50% chance of either). It only attacks PCs who actively try to help their fellow party members escape. If attacked and reduced to under 8 hp, the will o'wisp flees and never bothers the PCs again.

If the DM feels that the PCs need a break in getting on better terms with the firbolgs, or if the pace of the adventure needs speeding up, the following encounter may occur within the boundaries of the marsh.

The PCs hear the sounds of a commotion as they travel in or near the swamp. If they decide to investigate, a journey of several hundred yards brings them to a smelly, shadowy glen. Here the PCs find the two giant twins, Smeaghle and Feaghle, struggling against a quicksand pit, while the will o'wisp attempts to prevent their escape.

Smeaghle is submerged in the quicksand up to his waist, while Feaghle vainly attempts to use a rope to pull his brother out of the swamp and fight off the 'wisp at the same time. Meanwhile, the 'wisp is scorching Feaghle and drawing on the life essence of Smeaghle, who is in danger of drowning. Because of his great fright, Smeaghle is still in his 12′ firbolg form and has not even thought of using his *alter self* power to transform into something smaller.

The PCs' goal should be immediately obvious: save the firbolgs or drive off the 'wisp so that Feaghle may pull his brother out of the quicksand. The giantkin twins may not believe at first that the PCs are trying to help them, so it may be better for the PCs to act first and talk later.

Unless the situation changes, Smeaghle sinks beneath the quicksand six rounds after the PCs arrive, and he suffocates after four rounds of oxygen deprivation. The 'wisp will not be happy about newcomers who arrive to help the firbolgs, and it will certainly attack any PCs who aid its prey.

If the firbolg twins are rescued, they are very thankful to the PCs but still suspicious as to why the adventurers saved them. If the PCs make a reasonable attempt to befriend the twins, Smeaghle and Feaghle ask the party to accompany them back to their home so

that the PCs can speak with "Dad" and receive his thanks for saving their lives. By getting on the good side of the twins, the PCs will ease their task of convincing Haughnir to stop tearing down the hobgoblin fort.

Beneath the roots of a great water oak in the southern hex of the marsh is the will o'wisp's treasure. Over the centuries, it has accumulated 209 gp, 89 sp, two gems worth 50 gp and 100 gp, a gold ring worth 20 gp, three *arrows +3*, and a *wand of illumination* with 18 charges remaining. It is probable that the PCs may have received advance warning of the will o'wisp's presence from friendly encounters in the forest.

Will o'wisp: INT exceptional; AL CE; AC −8; MV fly 18 (A); HD 9; hp 28; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA change appearance; SD *magic missile, protection from evil,* and *web* are the only spells effective against it; MR spell immunities; SZ S; ML 17; XP 3,000; MC1.

8. Leave No Stone Unturned. Here, the PCs find a small, roughly 30'-diameter space that has been cleared of vegetation. The ground is nothing more than dirt and rocks, and the trees around the small clearing bear hideous wounds from claws. Buried halfway into the ground at the center of the open space is a 12" × 18" stone slab with the word "Elmenger" crudely chiseled onto its surface. Alert PCs may also notice that the ground near the stone has been turned over recently.

The stone marks the final resting place of Elmenger Stroud, an evil bandit who died in the Brettonwood some years ago and was buried here by his companions. Elmenger is now a half-strength wight, as he was slain by Drabkk when the bandit gang tried to explore the old hobgoblin outpost (area 5). The other bandits escaped but later met their deaths elsewhere in the forest. If Drabkk has been slain prior to this encounter, Elmenger will be at full strength (statistics in parentheses).

During the day, Elmenger normally rests under a few feet of dirt. He will not bother the PCs (unless they dig him up!). But at night he roams the woods around his grave, seeking victims. He is 75% likely to be active and within 1-6 rounds' distance of his lair. Elmenger attacks living beings on sight. Anyone who digs for a turn in the soil near his headstone will find the old bandit's treasure of 51 sp, 39 gp, and a 100-gp moonstone.

Elmenger (wight): INT average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 2+2 (4+3); hp 16 (26); THAC0 19 (15); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA energy drain; SD silver or magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 14; XP 420 (975); MC1.

9. Wood and Stone. The ground is unusually hilly and rocky in this region, and the forest floor is littered with pebbles. At the center of the area is a small clearing where an unlikely pair of friends pass the time in great philosophical discussions. The two creatures are a great old treant by the name of Clement, and a galeb duhr who calls himself Rockwell. These two beings are the main protectors of the Brettonwood, and they are respected by all of the woodland creatures—who are aware of their presence.

When the PCs first come upon the clearing, they can easily hear the basso voice of the treant and the gravelly voice of the galeb duhr. It is 40% likely that 2-12 sprites are in the clearing with the treant and galeb duhr, listening to the lively discussion but comprehending very little.

Both Clement and Rockwell are surprised to see the adventurers, as neither has seen outsiders in over a century. They are suspicious of the PCs' reasons for visiting them unless the PCs reveal one of Arias's rings or mention the name of a forest creature who referred the PCs to the treant. In either case, Clement becomes slightly more congenial while Rockwell continues to distrust the outsiders.

Clement is a wondrous source of information about the Brettonwood and its history; his thousand-year-old memory has not faded at all. Clement can send 1-6 sprites with the PCs as guides if they need to find a certain place in the forest. He may also offer suggestions on how to remedy the problems concerning the hobgoblin fort if the PCs have knowledge of the true situation (Clement will be amused if the PCs mention evil hobgoblin spirits inhabiting the fort, but he may initially refuse to say why).

While Clement and Rockwell represent an excellent opportunity for the PCs to learn the events behind the elf-hobgoblin war, or even a little of the truth concerning the hobgoblin fort, the DM should not give away information that would detract from the spirit of the adventure. It is better for the PCs to find out about the firbolgs on their own than to have the adventurers learn about the giant-kin from Clement.

If Clement is approached by the PCs and asked to act as a mediator between the firbolgs and Lady Ugleranod, he will find it in his best interests to do so. However, the PCs should be the ones convincing both sides to agree to live in peace, without fear or mistrust—not Clement. His only purpose should be to give the PCs' words credibility. A golden opportunity for the PCs to prove their intentions might occur during such a meeting (see "Halting the Bumps in the Night").

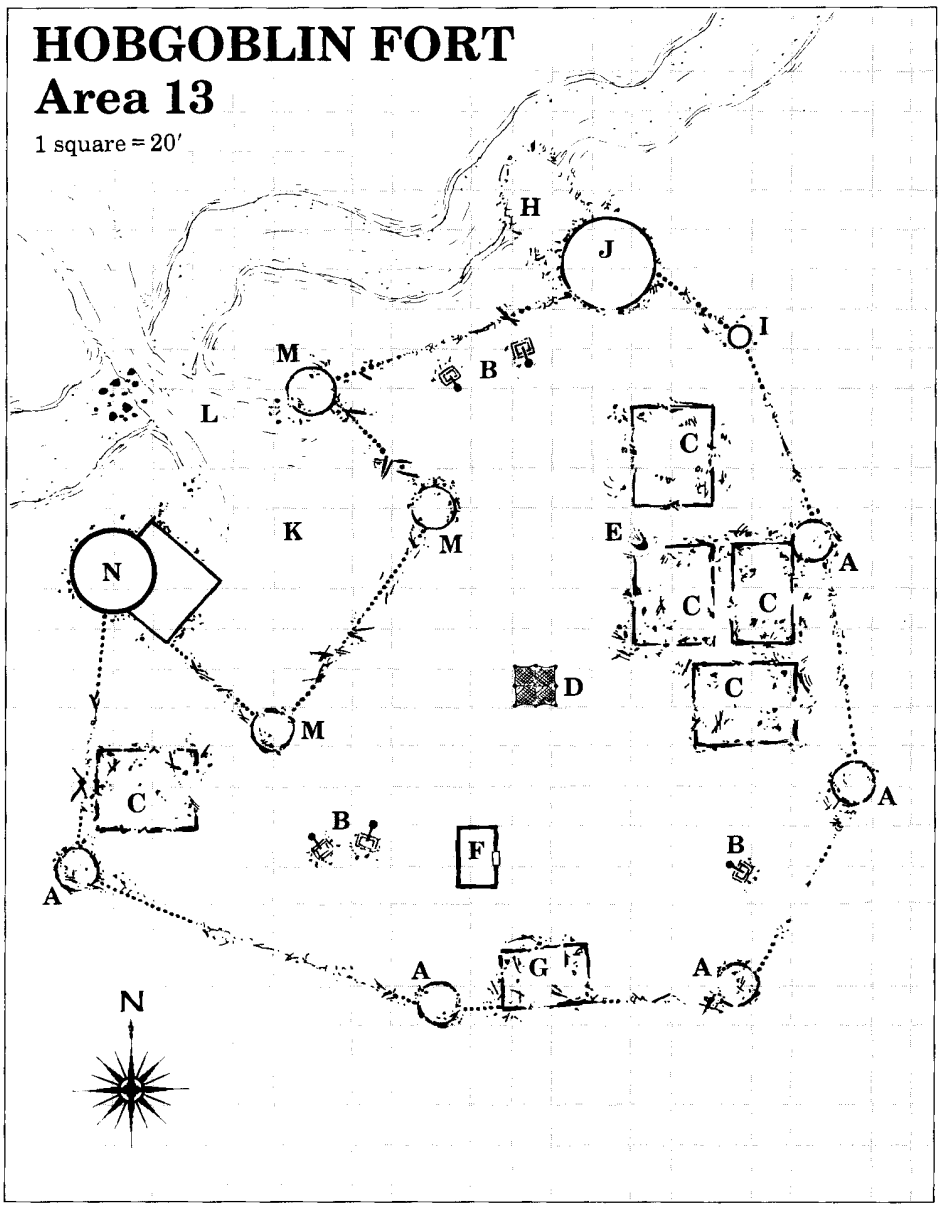
If for some reason the PCs decide to attack Clement and Rockwell, the treant and galeb duhr attempt to drive their opponents off with animated trees and boulders. If the PCs persist in bothering the treant, or if they attack with fire, Clement roars for aid. In 5-8 rounds, a force of 40 armed and angry sprites arrive to help get rid of the unwelcome PCs.

Clement (treant): INT very; AL CG; AC 0; MV 12; HD 12; hp 50; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 4-24; SA spells, animate boulders; SD never surprised; SZ H; ML 17; MC1.

Clement is extremely fond of the Brettonwood and its inhabitants. He is the oldest of the treants in the forest, and he is aware of the firbolgs' actions around the old fort. He feels that while their demolition efforts may benefit the wood, the eventual result will be no different than if the firbolgs had never found the fort at all—the fort will crumble away to dust in either case. If the PCs have a good attitude toward woodlands in general, Clement can be quite friendly; however, if the PCs are arrogant, careless or malicious, the treant may not aid them at all.

Rockwell (galeb duhr): INT very; AL N; AC −2; MV 6; HD 10; hp 42; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 4-24; SA spell use, animate boulders; SD spell use, immune to lightning and normal fire, +4 bonus to saves against magical fire; MR 20%; SZ L; ML 17; MC2.

Rockwell is more conservative than his treant friend, but he is quite liberal for a galeb duhr. Rockwell enjoys Clement's company, and he even finds the sprites to be an amusement. He is extremely distrustful of those he does not know, but if the PCs act in a noble and



friendly manner, Rockwell may grow to accept them. Both Clement and Rockwell, while slow to anger, never forget grudges.

Sprites (40): INT very; AL N; AC 6; MV 9, fly 18; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (sword); SA *detect good/evil*; SD *invisibility*; SZ S; ML 11; MC1.

10. Oracle. The Haunted Woods are very sparse in this region. The reason for this is unknown to most creatures now living, for the area was once inhabited by an ancient civilization of gray elves, the Aklimiari. The Noraldai believe that the gray elves are the ancestors of their tribe, but they have only stories and legends to give any credence to this claim. The Aklimiari left the forest long before the Noraldai began writing down their history; the reason for their departure is unknown.

The gray elves did leave the remains of their civilization behind, and while much of it is buried beneath the soil and rock of the forest floor, part of one important building—the oracle—can still be found in the forest. Even more unusual, the oracle continues to function, and PCs finding it may make use of its powers.

Atop a small wooded hill, the PCs find a pair of 8'-tall stone pillars covered with sigils and writing. A *comprehend languages* spell reveals the writings to be prayers and supplications to forest gods, written in an ancient form of Elvish. Any worshipper of a deity of the forest, nature, or the earth may realize and utilize the oracle's powers.

If a PC meets the above qualification and touches both pillars in a reverent manner (this is alluded to in the writings), he or she will be able to ask questions of the gods of the Brettonwood as if a *commune* spell had been cast. Nonclerics may ask two questions, while clerics and druids may ask one question for every two levels they possess (round up). After each use of the oracle, a small sacrifice must be given to the forest gods (a valuable, crafted item worth at least 10 gp) for it to function again. The oracle functions only once per year for any one individual, and a maximum of four times per month in any case.

11. Brother Spriggans. This area is the territory of a pair of touchy, volatile, and rather nasty spriggans. The spriggans occupy a cave near the top of a hill. From this vantage point, they are 50% likely to notice anyone approaching their home. If the PCs notice the cave and decide to investigate, they will find several stones buried upright and at bizarre angles in the ground 100' from the cave's mouth. The stones are a grotesque mockery of the ruined hobgoblin fort. The spriggans hate most of the forest creatures, but they especially despise and fear the firbolgs, who could handily defeat the spriggan in combat.

The spriggans assume their smaller form and claim to be pucks, or "cave spirits" when greeting any inquisitive PCs. The spriggans try to send the PCs away as quickly as possible, as they do not like acting in a cordial manner for any length of time. If asked about the hobgoblin fort, the spriggans can direct the PCs toward it, adding that "incredibly evil creatures live there." This comment is intended to provoke the PCs into attempting to kill the firbolgs, as the spriggans don't want to try to complete this task themselves. The spriggans lie as much as possible about the firbolgs and the Brettonwood, and they attempt to give the PCs as much false information as they can.

If the PCs ever return to the spriggan lair, or if they continue to harass the spriggans, the two creatures become very hostile and insulting toward the PCs. Eventually, they change into their larger forms in order to get rid of the intruders, using their *scare* ability as necessary. Hidden deep in the spriggan cave, under a large rock (requiring 20 Strength points to move) is the spriggan treasure of 250 gp, 600 sp, eight gems (3 × 10 gp, 2 × 50 gp, 100 gp, 2 × 500 gp), and a *wand of wonder* (eight charges remaining).

Spriggans (2): INT average; AL CE; AC 3 (5); MV 9 (15); HD 4 (8+4); hp 27, 23 (50, 44); THAC0 17 (11); #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8(+7); SA spells, thief skills; SD special; SZ S (3′ tall) or L (12′ tall); ML 16; XP 4,000; MC5 (Giant-kin, spriggan).

12. Lost Adventurers. At this location in the forest, a trio of adventurers has set up a small camp. They are the only survivors of another party that Arias Goldbrow sent out to investigate the hobgoblin fort.

Originally, the group contained seven members, but misfortune has taken its toll. The group's priest was slain by the wights in the hobgoblin outpost (area 5), a henchman was lost to a ghostwood tree, and two other adventurers, a fighter and a thief, were slain when a Noraldai patrol mistook the adventurers for evil bandits and ambushed them. The remaining three are Exlix Thorgslayer, a dwarven warrior; Marcus, a human warrior; and Matar Hawkwind, a human mage.

The three adventurers are thoroughly discouraged, and all they wish to do is leave the Brettonwood. Marcus is carrying a very large sack over his shoulder; inside is the body of Thyren, their dead human rogue companion. If the PCs heal the NPCs and provide them with directions on how to get out of the forest (the now-undead priest, Frederick, had the only copy of the Noraldai map), Matar promises to send the PCs a reward if they ever return to Dalwych. If the PCs return to the town to claim their reward, they will receive five gems worth 50 gp each.

Exlix Thorgslayer: AL NG; AC 4; MV 9; F5; hp 23 (max 39); THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 15, C 17; ML 13; battle axe, heavy crossbow, chain mail, 50 gp.

Exlix is usually grumpy, especially since his priest friend was slain by the wights. He is prone to sudden outbursts of verbal abuse (often toward no one in particular). He refuses to tell the PCs what a "thorg" is if they ask him.

Marcus: AL NG; AC 4; MV 9; F1; hp 7 (max 9); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15; ML 11; long sword, short bow, chain mail, shield, 29 gp.

Marcus is a neophyte adventurer; while he is still curious about the world, his desire to adventure again soon has been dampened by the party's misfortunes.

Matar Hawkwind: AL CG; AC 6; MV 12; M6; hp 16 (max 21); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; D 18, I 17, W 15; ML 13; dagger, 60 gp. Spells: *magic missile, light, shield, spider climb; invisibility, Melf's acid arrow; hold person, slow.*

Matar is congenial and quite loquacious. He will definitely warn the PCs about the wights if they are friendly toward him.

13. Hobgoblin Fort. The remains of Drabkk's fort rest atop a crumbling hill and overlook a riverbed that has been dry for years. The firbolgs have been busy knocking down and removing the old stone constructions, and no hobgoblin spirits lurk anywhere on the premises of the old fort.

As the PCs investigate the ruin, these facts should become apparent, although the identity of those responsible for dismantling the fort may remain unknown. However, the frequent visits of the firbolgs have left a visible path that leads through the woods to the firbolg lair. This path is located to the northwest of the fort, and intrepid PCs may follow it in order to locate the firbolg camp (area 14). The firbolgs are quite familiar with the ruin and the monsters that lurk within it, but they have not bothered to slay any of them yet.

The buildings of the fort are centuries old and not exceptionally sound, as they were not well built even when new. Anyone who haphazardly damages any part of the fort risks a 15% chance of causing a collapse of all stonework in a 10′ radius, and a 5% chance that such damage results in the entire structure collapsing. Anyone within 10′ of a collapse suffers from 2d6 hp damage (for someone standing near a minor collapse) to 8d6 hp damage (for someone caught inside a collapsing structure).

13A. Outer Wall Towers. These defensive towers are in various states of decay. Some are mostly intact, but others have been reduced to nothing more than piles of stones. Their original purpose was to allow the hobgoblins to fire arrows or hurl rocks at would-be attackers. The outer wall was once an 8'-high wooden palisade; most of it has fallen down or rotted away over the years. Anyone who searches the two relatively intact towers might find some ancient bones, scraps of armor, and rusted weapons (all of hobgoblin make), but no real treasure.

13B. Hobgoblin Catapults. The hobgoblins' most powerful weapons were built on these sites, and sockets used to anchor some of them can still be found at these locations, though the weapons themselves have long since rotted away. Although they would have worked well against a conventional siege, the catapults were rendered all but useless against the Noraldai attack. The elves' camouflage and stealth abilities presented few targets for the catapult crews. Near each catapult site is a small pile of 2-5 spherical boulders.

13C. Barracks. Wooden barracks once stood at these locations in the hobgoblin fort. Centuries of neglect have taken their toll on the buildings, reducing them to little more than rubble. A diligent search through the remains of a building might turn up an occasional rusted weapon or copper piece, but little else of value can be found.

Before the hobgoblins were destroyed, one warrior that bunked in the western barracks had been taking care of a pretty yellow plant that he found in the woods. The plant was an immature yellow musk creeper, and its seedlings have survived for the last eight centuries.

The current creeper is a large plant that spreads across the southeastern corner of the ruined building, and it attempts to spray its musk on any who approach to investigate it. Guarding the creeper are two of the three centaurs that volunteered to scout the fort for the Noraldai; they are now yellow musk zombies. The third centaur escaped from the plant, but he became lost on his return to the Centaur Demesne, wandered into a grove of ghostwoods, and was subsequently captured and starved to death.

Hidden near the yellow musk creeper's bulbous root is the following treasure: 92 gp, 48 sp, a silver axe worth 30 gp, a clay jar with one application of *Keoghtom's ointment*, and a 10-gp gem.

Yellow musk creeper: INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 0; HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 6; Dmg special; SA gas; SD root must be destroyed; SZ L; ML 20; XP 650; MC2.

Yellow musk zombie centaurs (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 10; MV 6; HD 2 (special); hp 20, 16; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SD special; SZ L; ML 20; XP 120; MC2.

13D. Prisoner's Cage. Recently captured creatures were kept in this large iron cage before being transferred to the dungeon cells at area N6. The cage is badly rusted and corroded, and the bars on one side have been forced apart in some sort of escape or rescue attempt (this occurred during the combat between the elves and hobgoblins). There is otherwise nothing unusual in or about the cage.

13E. Ankheg Lair. Six months ago, a large ankheg burrowed up into the courtyard of the fort. The ankheg and its mate do not frequent this area of their burrow often, but if one of them is nearby (25% chance), it will be hiding just inside the lip of the tunnel entrance. When a likely meal passes by, the ankheg rushes out to attack. If it scores a hit, the ankheg drags its prey back into the tunnel.

The small confines of the tunnel make any blow directed at an ankheg carrying a victim 50% likely to hit the victim instead. A captured PC can escape from the ankheg by successfully making a bend bars roll (one attempt per round). If one ankheg is slain, the other appears 5-10 rounds later to attack any remaining PCs. Deep in the maze of tunnels is the ankhegs' treasure, a pile of 29 gp, 90 sp, and 83 cp from dead victims.

Ankhegs (2): INT non; AL N; AC overall 2, underside 4; MV 12, burrow 6; HD 6+2; hp 34, 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18 (crush) plus 1-4 (acid); SA squirt acid; SZ L; ML 9; XP 975; MC2.

13F. Leaders' Quarters. During the time when hobgoblins operated the fort, several of the hobgoblin lieutenants were quartered in this low mudstone building. While the roof has disintegrated with time, the walls remain standing. Aside from ceramic shards and unrecognizable bits of metal equipment, no treasure can be found here.

13G. Armory/Forge. All that remains of this building is the forge area, as the rest was demolished during the elven attack. The brick chimney of the forge sits in the middle of the building, surrounded by weathered stones. While the tools and armor once kept here are either missing or useless, a search of the forge will reveal a loose brick that covers the small niche where a hobgoblin captain stored his personal cache of valuables. The niche holds a small sack containing 30 gp and a jade necklace worth 250 gp.

13H. Cremated Remains. After the Noraldai defeated the hobgoblins protecting the fort, the bodies of the evil humanoids were collected and burned by the elves to appease their deities. The humanoid remains are long gone, but the area still retains a high level of psychic residue from both the battle and the hobgoblin spirits. Anyone remaining in this area for more than one turn will be able to faintly hear battle cries, clashing swords, and the groans of dying elves and hobgoblins. Digging up the earth has a 10% chance per turn of revealing 1-8 gp that belonged to a dead hobgoblin. A total of 22 gp can be collected in this manner.

13I. Small Tower. Unlike the other towers on the outer wall of the fort, this tower has remained intact. The quality of stone used to build it was superior to that of the other towers, and the lack of engineering skill among the hobgoblins didn't affect the smaller tower in the same way that it did larger ones.

During the siege, several hobgoblins barricaded themselves in this tower and refused to come out, especially once the elves overran the fort. To prevent the hobgoblins from causing any further problems in the Brettonwood, the doors were *wizard locked* shut, trapping them inside forever. If the PCs manage to dispel the *wizard lock* (vs. 8th-level magic) or batter down the door, they will find six hobgoblins in the tower, all long dead from starvation. If the skeletons are searched, a total of 69 sp and 20 gp can be found.

Several crude pulleys can be found on the ground outside of the tower. The firbolgs are currently trying to pull this

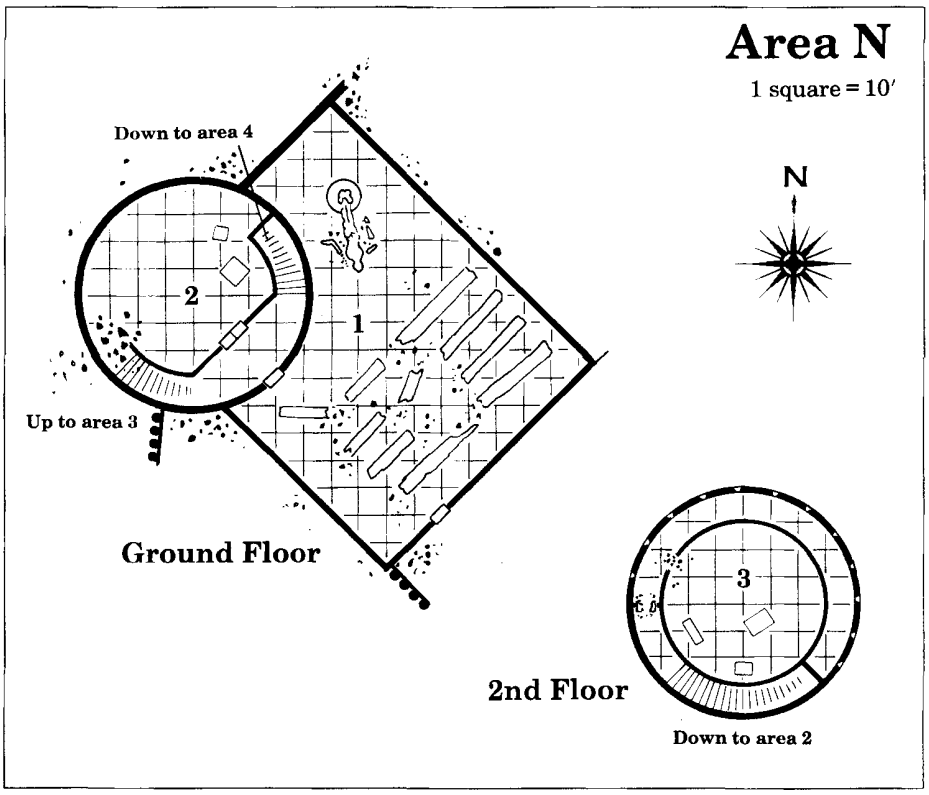
tower down, mainly because it represents the greatest challenge in the fort. Only the firbolgs possess enough mass and strength to effectively use these tackles; PCs who try to use them will be disappointed.

13J. Large Tower. This two story tower was used both as a defensive fortification and as a storehouse. The upper level has crumbled away, but the ground floor walls still remain. A great deal of stone has been removed from the western area of the tower by the firbolgs. Anything of value inside the tower was removed by the elves or has subsequently rotted away.

13K. Inner Courtyard. Most of the grass and weeds that once grew in this area have been flattened or uprooted by the actions of the firbolgs. All of the walls and towers that bound the courtyard show signs of stones having been removed, much in the same manner as area 13J. Pieces of shattered stone lie scattered all over the courtyard, and a pile of larger stones sits near the gouged ground at area 13L. Eventually, these stones are to be pulled down the sloped ground and placed atop the stone dam that the firbolgs are building in the riverbed.

13L. Slides. Here the firbolgs move stones from the fort down into the riverbed. The action of sliding the stones down this slope has left several deep furrows in the soil. The path that leads to the firbolg camp (area 14) begins here. It continues through the riverbed and northwest away from the ruins. Anyone with tracking proficiency can easily follow the trail; otherwise, there is a 70% chance of successfully following the trail left by the giant-kin.

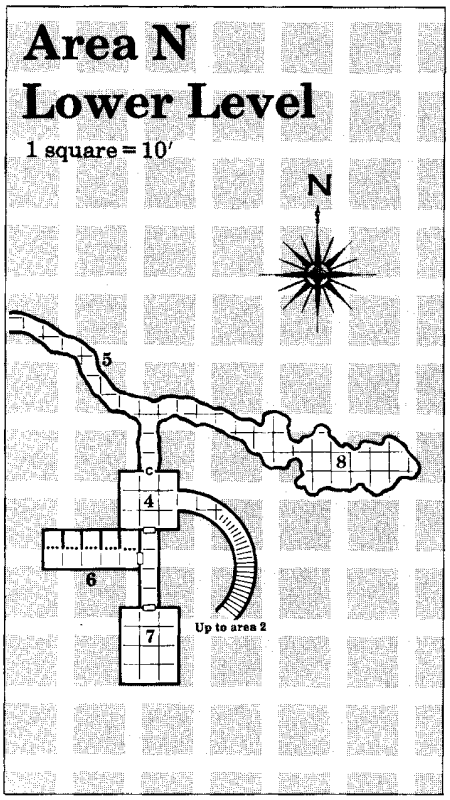
13M. Courtyard Towers. These towers are slightly taller than those that ring the outer wall, and they were originally fitted with arrow slits for defense. Firbolg demolition activities on these towers have made them even more dangerous to explore than other parts of the fort. For every round that a creature spends inside one of the towers, there is a 1% cumulative chance that his actions cause the tower to collapse inward. Anyone inside suffers 5d6 hp damage (save vs. petrification for half damage), and anyone suffering 20 hp or more damage is pinned beneath the rubble until freed by another individual. There is little of interest in any of the towers.



13N. Shrine & Drabkk's Tower. This tower and accompanying building housed Drabkk's quarters and the fort's shrine to the hobgoblin god Maglubiyet. The stone used to build this structure is superior to any in the fort, which explains why the building remains in good condition. Beneath the building is a small excavated dungeon, which was off-limits to the majority of the hobgoblins. The Noraldai had some difficulty exploring the entire dungeon, and they gave up in disgust without finding the hobgoblin tribe's treasure. The firbolgs have also done a little exploring of the building (in their diminutive form), but they ignored the treasure room (area N8), thinking it was only some sort of burial chamber.

N1. Shrine. The Noraldai found the goblins' worship of Maglubiyet thoroughly repellent, so they ransacked the shrine and destroyed as many icons as they could. A stone statue of the hobgoblin deity, its eyes removed, lies smashed in the northern end of the room. Benches and tables have also been smashed, and one of the statue's citrine eyes (worth 100 gp) lies hidden under a broken bench. The other eye was stolen during the capture of the fort and was later lost in the woods. A pile of old suits of armor—hobgoblin trophies from past battles—lies against the west wall. The doors leading to area N2 are scarred with axe and sword blows but are otherwise miraculously intact.

N2. Witchdoctor Quarters and Sanctum. The hobgoblin witchdoctors practiced their art from this room, and a few dark stains on the floor imply that sacrifices were a part of their work. This room was originally quite spartan, and the prayers and sayings written on the walls have long since flaked off. A locked wooden chest hidden beneath a pile of trash contains 20 yellowed human skulls, three cracked and worthless wolf pelts, a crumbling sack of incense and dried fungi (now no more than powdery but slightly fragrant dust), and 100 agate chips (worth 1 gp each), all of which were used in religious ceremonies.



N3. Drabkk's Quarters. The door to this room has been broken down. Even though 800 years have passed, signs of looting are still present. The ruins of once-valuable furniture lie strewn about the chamber in unusual positions, two large chests are overturned and empty, and glass shards litter the floor. The Noraldai broke in here after they successfully conquered the fort, and they took or destroyed all items of value in the hobgoblin leader's chamber. As a result, nothing of value can be found.

N4. Guardroom. This room was always manned by a pair of elite guards to prevent an escape from the prison cells in area N6. The guards in the dungeon were forced to leave their posts during the elven attack, taking their valuables with them. The only items in this room, aside from a layer of thick dust, are two oaken stools and an empty wine flask. The door in the north wall is concealed behind a fake wall, but age has discolored the mock-up so that the door is easily found.

N5. Escape Route. This was once a secret passage that exited the fort roughly 250′ away in a cluster of shrubs and bushes. A cave-in occurred about 90 years ago, sealing the dungeon off from inquisitive animals and faeries. A few small animal skeletons lie in the rubble, unfortunate victims that died when they were trapped inside the dungeon after the cave-in.

N6. Prison. Captives of the hobgoblins were kept down here until they could serve a useful purpose as slave or sacrifice, until they died, or until they were served to Drabkk as an afternoon snack. The Noraldai freed all of the prisoners after they captured the fort, and all of the cell doors still stand wide open. Each cell contains two pairs of manacles, a ceramic pot, and a worm-eaten stool.

N7. Torture Room. Various instruments of pain and torture once lined the walls of this room. The Noraldai despise torture, and most of the machines were dismantled and destroyed when the elves came across this chamber. A search of the room will reveal nothing more than damaged pieces of metal and wooden splinters.

N8. Treasure Room. The hobgoblins found this small cavern when they excavated the dungeon, and Drabkk appropriated it for the tribal treasure chamber. To keep other greedy hobgoblins from stealing the treasure, one of the witchdoctors animated six orcs into zombies, and they have guarded the room for centuries. The Noraldai who found the zombies chose to leave them alone, and the hobgoblin treasure has rested here ever since the fort fell.

Orc zombies (6): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 13 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; MR special; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; MC1.

If the PCs defeat the zombies, the adventurers can enter the treasure room. Five iron chests rest against the south wall; all are locked and contain 300-800 tarnished black silver pieces. A smaller wooden chest lies in the northwest alcove. It is locked and trapped with a needle trap (the poison has been inert for a very long time, but any PC stung by the needle should be allowed to worry about the consequences). Inside this chest are 500 gp, 50 small gems worth 1-20 gp each, four malachite necklaces worth 50-300 gp each (one is a *necklace of strangulation*), and a silvered flask containing a potion of *frost giant strength.*

Four shields and 15 assorted swords litter the floor of the room. None of them are magical, but the shields have historic value (each would sell for up to 25 gp). Finally, a hideous wooden mask covered with runes rests on a ledge against the south wall. The mask was a tribal totem, supposedly a gift from Maglubiyet himself. Any nongood wearer can use its *scare* power three times each day.

14. Firbolg Camp. A 60′ longhouse, constructed from logs, thatch and stone, sits atop the highest point of this open, treeless meadow. North of the house is a small garden surrounded by a low wooden fence, and barely a score of feet from the garden is a small wooden shed. All of these elements make up the home of the firbolg family.

The giant-kin, who have lived here for slightly more than a year, are very conscientious about what they take from the wood, as well as what went into the building of their home. Their care for the land is shown by the high density of young trees around the firbolg meadow, as the giants planted two seedlings for every grown tree that they cut down.

When the PCs first approach the house, it is 10% likely that all of the firbolgs are away on their own business: hunting, roaming the woods, or working at the hobgoblin fort. If no one is present, at least one firbolg will return home 5-40 minutes after the PCs first reach the meadow, providing inquisitive adventurers with a prime opportunity to get into trouble. If someone is home, 3-6 of the family members are present somewhere on the grounds of the firbolg domain.

The firbolgs are initially neutral toward outsiders. The giant-kin try to discern the intentions of any visitors before committing themselves to hostility or hospitality. If the PCs are nonhostile and friendly, they might be invited inside for a hot meal and conversation. However, the eldest or most powerful firbolg who is at home will be on guard against the PCs throughout such an encounter. Suspicious-acting PCs are asked to leave, and hostile PCs are dealt with appropriately.

Convincing the firbolgs to stop their destruction of the fort may prove to be a very difficult endeavor. The firbolgs will

want their original land back if the PCs insist they leave the fort alone, as the giants do not want to live near such an ugly object as the hobgoblin ruins.

In order for the firbolgs to move back onto their land, the presence of "Lady Ugly"—Lady Ugleranod, the drow elf—must be removed, and the firbolgs will be adamant on this point (especially Lieulg). Unless the PCs have previously met with the treant Clement or understand that Lady Ugleranod is not evil, it is very possible that the PCs may kill the drow and endanger their alignment. If the subject of treants comes up in conversation with the giant-kin, the firbolgs express their desire to get along with the treants. Clever PCs might be able to use this to their advantage in solving the problems concerning the hobgoblin fort (see "Halting the Bumps in the Night").

The longhouse is of simple but sturdy construction. Wood logs are held together with mud and daub mortar, and a dry thatch roof reaches a comfortable peak of 16'. The few small windows can be opened for light and ventilation. A huge stone fireplace and chimney dominate the interior space. The building contains no solid interior walls, but woven mats of grasses and plants, as well as stitched animal hides, can be hung from the rafters to provide some privacy.

A large locked wooden box hidden under a pile of old furs rests in one corner of the house. This holds the majority of the firbolgs' treasure. The combined wealth of Haughnir's family consists of 380 gp, 409 sp, three silver Noraldai necklaces worth 30 gp each, 24 ornamental gems worth 10 gp, a potion of *healing* and an *elixir of madness* (both in leaded glass flasks), and a silver-bladed battle axe worth 80 gp. Each firbolg also owns some treasure, which is kept on his or her person.

Firbolgs (6): INT average; AL N (CG); AC 2; MV 15; HD 13+7; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+7 (giant-sized weapons) or double weapon damage +7 (used two-handed); SA spells; SD bat away missiles; MR 15%; SZ L; ML 16; MC2 (Giant-kin, firbolg).

Haughnir (81 hp) is the leader of the family. He is steadfast in his leadership, but he always takes the opinions of the other family members into account before making a decision. He has the annoying habit (as firbolg habits go) of always keeping his word whenever he gives it. Haughnir will always use his *alter self* ability to assume the form of whatever creature he is dealing with, and he never attacks first unless sorely provoked. Haughnir owns a *wand of magic missiles* (31 charges) that he may use in times of great difficulty. His weapon of choice is a beautiful *two-handed sword +1*.

Lieulg (hp 64) is Haughnir's wife. She is primarily concerned with making sure that no harm comes to their twin sons, Smeaghle and Feaghle. She is mindful of the powers of humans and demihumans, and rarely trusts them. Lieulg owns several pieces of jewelry worth a total of 1,200 gp, and she wields a great spear in battle. If the twins are ever attacked in her presence, Lieulg flies into a rage, gaining +2 on all of her attack and damage rolls.

Grungle (72 hp) is staying with his brother's family until he can return to the firbolg tribe and claim a wife. He tends to be quite neutral in outlook and has a rather destructive streak; he might attack hostile PCs unless restrained by another firbolg. Grungle is also the most fun loving of all the firbolgs, and he might even gamble or drink with friendly PCs. Grungle owns a 500-gp tourmaline and wields a battle axe.

Smeaghle and **Feaghle** (60 hp, 56 hp) are giantish curiosity personified. Even worse, they are accomplished pranksters, and they may subject the PCs to several forms of humiliation before being scolded by Haughnir or Lieulg. Neither twin has any outstanding personal treasure, and both use two-handed swords in battle.

Naebulg (68 hp) is a crotchety old firbolg who just wants to be left alone. He still has memories of wars against magical enemies of the giants, which may account for his overactive imagination. Naebulgh won't have anything to do with the adventurers unless they want to go fishing somewhere and listen to hours of the firbolg's tales. Naebulg has a gold amulet worth 120 gp, and he wields a two-handed sword in combat.

15. Old Firbolg Camp. This area, just north of Lady Ugleranod's home, has become slightly run down since the giant-kin abandoned it a year ago. Three old wooden longhouses stand open to the elements, the garden is choked with weeds, and a battered old rowboat lies against the side of the largest longhouse. With a little bit of work, the firbolgs could easily restore the beauty of this site, but someone will first have to deal with the pair of giant lizards that have taken up residence here. The lizards' clutch of eggs is located in a trash pile inside the biggest longhouse, but there is nothing of value to be found there. The lizards hiss at anyone who comes near the longhouse, and they will fight to the death to protect their eggs.

Giant lizards (2): INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 3+1; hp 25, 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA double damage on roll of 20; SZ H; ML 9; XP 270; MC1.

16. Lady Ugleranod. At this point along the Wilidiri, a small canyon was carved out of the landscape by the river. Low stone bluffs of 20' to 40' rise above the river, but the river banks are level with the Wilidiri five miles downstream. If the bluffs are inspected, veins of fool's gold can be seen.

Atop the southern bluff is a small cottage made of wood and mud. The owner of the cottage is one of the newest residents of the Brettonwood, Lady Alshria Ugleranod, a renegade drow elf. She left the comforts of her noble life because her views on life (she is unswervingly chaotic good) conflicted with those of the drow community.

Lady Ugleranod is an unusual female drow, as she is a multi-classed cleric/mage. In leaving the Underdark behind, Lady Ugleranod has forsworn anything related to her earlier life; she no longer possesses any drow items of any kind. She renounced her former evil gods, and she now worships the kinder deities of the Brettonwood.

Lady Ugleranod is a pure maiden, and she has captured the affection of the Black Unicorn, who is well respected by all of the creatures in the Brettonwood. Having a unicorn ally has been very helpful and necessary to Lady Ugleranod, as many of the creatures of the Brettonwood might otherwise attempt to slay her without first determining her true nature.

When the PCs arrive at Lady Ugleranod's cottage, she is only 40% likely to be present. If she is not at home, Lady Ugleranod will return in 1-6 hours. The Black Unicorn is 30% likely to be near Lady Ugleranod's cottage even if the elf is not present; he watches over her land. Her cottage is never locked, as Lady Ugleranod doesn't fear thieves in the forest.

The main room of the cottage is used as a living area. A small stone hearth, a low wooden table, and several tree-stump chairs serve as decor. A stack of books sits on the table. These books are Lady Ugleranod's diary and notes on her life in the forest, and anyone who reads them will gain insight to her true character and good alignment.

Lady Ugleranod's bedroom is spartan as well. The only furnishings are a straw mattress, a pair of small wooden chests, and a clay lamp. One chest contains nothing but clothes that Lady Ugleranod has made. The other chest, which is locked, holds the drow elf's spell books. Her spell books contain, in addition to those spells that Lady Ugleranod has memorized, six first-level spells, five second-level spells, and four third-level spells. In addition, the chest holds 100 gp in emergency funds, and two potions of *healing*.

Lady Ugleranod will not be hostile toward any PCs she encounters, although she may be angry at anyone who has entered her home without permission. If the PCs are not hostile, she offers them a meal in exchange for conversation. Lady Ugleranod queries the PCs on their knowledge of the Brettonwood, especially for any information that they have on the firbolgs, as she has not seen them in over a year. She feels that the firbolgs did not like her, and she blames it on her drow heritage.

Lady Ugleranod wants desperately for the creatures of the forest to accept her, for she knows little of the surface world and she cannot safely return to the Underdark. If treated civilly, Lady Ugleranod will comply with reasonable PC requests.

If the PCs attack Lady Ugleranod, she immediately tries to get away using her *fly* and *invisibility* spells. If the Black Unicorn is nearby, he immediately charges to the elf's defense, giving Lady Ugleranod time to escape. The drow woman will avoid the party thereafter, unless they kill the Black Unicorn or steal her spell books. If either happens, she will try to ambush the PCs at night and slay all of them. The unicorn is her only friend in the Brettonwood, and without her spell books, she will be an easy target for any drow-hater who tries to kill her.

If the PCs find the Black Unicorn before meeting Lady Ugleranod, the unicorn will try to prevent them from accosting her until he can ascertain their intentions. The unicorn is unswervingly loyal to the elf, and he would give his life to protect her. If the Black Unicorn is slain, not only will Lady Ugleranod be upset, but the faerie creatures of the forest may mobilize to eliminate the PCs. All encounters with faeries will be treated as *hostile* (*DMG*, page 103), and any faerie pranks will be lethal.

Lady Ugleranod: AL CG; AC 6; MV 12; C6/M6; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA drow abilities, spells; SD +2 to saving throws vs. spells; S 14, D 18, C 12, I 18, W 17, Ch 15; MR 62%; MC1; quarterstaff.

Lady Ugleranod has memorized the following mage spells: *cantrip, magic missile, mend, shield; alter self, invisibility; fly, monster summoning I.* She has memorized the following priest spells: *animal friendship, create water, cure light wounds* (×2), *pass without trace; silence 15' radius, slow poison, speak with animals* (×3)*; create food and water, dispel magic, tree.* As a drow elf, Lady Ugleranod may use the following spells in addition to those that she has memorized: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion,* and *dispel magic* (once per day each). Lady Ugleranod also gains +2 on any saving throws vs. magical attacks because she is a drow.

Black Unicorn: INT exceptional; AL CG; AC 2; MV 24; HD 4+4; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-12; SA charge; SD limited *teleport*; immune to poison, *death, hold,* and *charm* spells; SZ L; ML 14; MC1. In addition to its immunities, the Black Unicorn saves against magical spells as an 11th-level wizard.

Halting the Bumps in the Night

This section deals with how the PCs can best solve the problems in the adventure, and how the DM can help a confused or lost group of PCs finish the adventure.

To restate the problem: The Noraldai fear that the spirits of their hobgoblin enemies, who were slain 800 years ago, have somehow returned to their ruined fort and are planning revenge against the elves. The PCs must discover the cause of the noises in the night and correctly attribute the disturbance to the firbolgs who are currently tearing down the fort. In order to appease the elves, the noises must stop. If the PCs tell Arias Goldbrow that the fort is being torn down, he will demand that the firbolgs leave the fort alone, as it would be unneighborly to violate a place of sacred elven taboos. The firbolgs, who don't really want to halt their destruction efforts, will agree to do so only if their old land is given back to them. This land has not really been stolen, but the renegade drow lives nearby, and the firbolgs fear her.

Obviously, the PCs shouldn't try to kill the firbolgs. These magical giants are much too powerful for a party of 3rd-6th level characters, but the PCs may try to do this anyway. The PCs really shouldn't kill Lady Ugleranod either. Not only is the Black Unicorn on her side (a clue to the drow's real nature), but she hasn't done anything wrong. She isn't even evil. The DM may have to drop a few clues in order to keep well-minded PCs from choosing either of these harsh courses of action.

The simplest solution to this dilemma may be to approach Lady Ugleranod and convince her to move to another region of the forest. However, Lady Ugleranod will not want to go just anywhere, as she was relatively isolated at her home on the river bluffs, and she fears that some of the forest creatures might try to kill her. If Lady Ugleranod is presented to the leaders of the important factions of the Brettonwood (Clement, Ceodrua, and Haughnir), and her friendship with the Black Unicorn is proven, the leaders will pledge friendship to the drow, and the forest beings will begin to accept her. Bringing the female drow before the Noraldai with no other forest creatures present is not a good idea, as the paranoid Noraldai will most likely kill Lady Ugleranod before asking any questions.

Another possible solution is to cut down all the thrumwood trees that might capture the loud sounds of demolition at the hobgoblin fort. If no sounds are transmitted to the Noraldai, the elves believe that the nighttime noises have ended, and the firbolgs can continue demolishing the fort. There are some major drawbacks to this solution, however. Unless the PCs have a way to distinguish thrumwood trees from normal trees (a treant can do it but wouldn't be willing to help the PCs kill healthy trees), they might have to chop down every nearby tree. The firbolgs would go along with this only if the PCs

replant two trees for every one that they cut down. However, Clement the treant won't be pleased at all with the PCs if they do this, and he might let them know it.

Clever PCs might come up with another workable solution, but the first solution proposed here offers the best opportunities for role-playing and negotiations. Since the PCs begin with no reputation at all in the forest, they will have to befriend some or all of the leading personages within the Brettonwood in order to convince the firbolgs that Lady Ugleranod is not harmful to them. The best way to do this is to set up some kind of meeting between Lady Ugleranod, the firbolgs (Haughnir and Grungle will go as the giant-kin's representatives), and whichever forest leaders the PCs are on good terms with. Due to the firbolgs' desire to please the treants, Clement is the best choice here.

At the meeting, the PCs will have to vouch for Lady Ugleranod and convince the firbolgs that she is no danger to them. If the PCs successfully do this, Haughnir will give his word that the firbolgs will not harm the drow elf, Clement will accept Lady Ugleranod as a member of the Brettonwood community, and Lady Ugleranod will agree to give the firbolgs a wide berth in the woods. If the PCs manage to negotiate this solution, award the party a story goal award of 4,000 XP.

Although careful PCs may breeze through the negotiations and role-playing of the adventure, it is also possible for the adventurers to make things very difficult for themselves. PCs who wantonly damage the Brettonwood, kill faerie creatures, and commit other atrocities against the forest's inhabitants may severely damage their credibility. Angering Clement and the treants will certainly not help the PCs' cause at all. If the players manage to turn the entire wood against their characters, so be it. The DM should not use any extraordinary methods to ensure PC success. Maybe the players will learn that fighting everything isn't always the best solution.

The DM has a few tricks that may be used in order to help the PCs discover the scope of the problem in the Brettonwood, and to keep them from making mistakes in the forest. Klaussen the talking owl is an excellent ally for the PCs, as he can dispense advice and keep the PCs out of fatal situations ("I don't think attacking that giant is a good idea. He's really big, and he might have friends."). Clement and the other treants are excellent sources of knowledge, and some of the wood's tiny magical inhabitants might be able to help PCs—provided that the PCs can put up with their pranks. The DM should be careful with these sources of aid, however, as the PCs should really try to figure things out for themselves. No big hints should be given unless the PCs are truly stuck.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs sort through the difficulties of solving the Noraldai problem, they can return to Arias Goldbrow and claim their reward. If the elves were never well-disposed toward the PCs, Arias curtly thanks the adventurers, gives them their payment, and sends them on their way.

If the PCs impressed Arias and the Noraldai, the elves hold a celebration for the heroes in the forest itself. During the night-long feast, many faeries show up and join in the revels. It is even possible that the PCs may recognize and remember some of the sprites and pixies that attend the party! However, the faeries will be on relatively good behavior, and they will not play tricks on the guests of honor. Arias allows the PCs to keep the silver ring that he gave them at the beginning of the adventure, but he ask for the return of the Brettonwood map. The PCs are welcome to copy the map before returning it, if they wish.

Successful completion of the adventure may open a new realm of adventuring possibilities for the PCs. Lady Ugleranod still remembers the route that she used to escape from drow civilization, and she can tell the PCs where this entrance to the Underdark lies. Perhaps the PCs will wish to investigate what remains of the gray elf civilization that flourished when the Brettonwood was young. The PCs might also decide to explore more of the Brettonwood, or even to make a decent map of it. And if the PCs failed, well . . . perhaps they learned something. Ω

Our Cheerful Playtesters for This Issue Were:

Alan Grimes, Thomas Chambers, John Plax, Sterling Hershey, Mark Spencer, Troy Guffey, Mike Schultz, Leonard Wilson, Katrina Blau, Ann Wilson, Gael Wilson, and Gary Wilson.

Thanks for your help!

The Ooops File

The map on page 15 of issue #37 ("Serpents of the Sands") contains an error. The text for area 12 states: "A 7'-diameter boulder drops out of a secret compartment in the ceiling at the area marked X," but there is no X indicated on the map. This X should be placed in the 10th space west of the false door, in the open space between the end of the arrow and the numeral 12.

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PANDORA'S APPRENTICE

BY LEONARD WILSON

A boxful of trouble

Artwork by Robert Klasnich

Leonard writes: "After two years of friendship that culminated in a whirlwind romance, I married my best friend, Ann, in May of this year. 'The Heart Blade,' a love story adventure I wrote for the PENDRAGON game, paid for her rings, and 'The Ghost of Mistmoor' (DUNGEON® Adventures #35) paid for our honeymoon. Ann, too, has writing dreams, and is currently working on her first adventure for DUNGEON Magazine."

"Pandora's Apprentice" is a short AD&D® 2nd Edition adventure for 2-5 player characters of 1st-5th level (15 or fewer total levels) and any mixture of races and classes. Good PCs are greatly preferred, and under *no* circumstances should evil PCs be taken on this adventure. At least one PC must carry a magical item.

The landmarks within the adventure should be placed on an existing city map before the module is run.

Adventure Background

While the PCs are visiting the local armory in any decent-sized town or city, a freckle-faced red-headed girl of 13 or so, dressed in fine clothing, wanders in and starts looking around curiously at the wares—and the PCs.

"This is no place for the likes of you, lassie," the shopkeeper warns good-naturedly.

The girl just wrinkles her nose and goes back to staring at the PCs, eventually asking "Are you *real* adventurers?" She seems to be in awe of them and of the weapons in the shop, and starts eagerly asking all sorts of questions.

The girl is Nissa, an absolute genius of a child recently taken on as an apprentice to a local mage named Pandora. Nissa is the fifth daughter of an impoverished knight but, despite the obscure future her social status holds for her, she has known all her life that she's destined for great things. Since entering her apprenticeship, she's seen that magic is the key to greatness and has become obsessed with mastering this tool of her "destiny." She's also become absolutely enamored with magical items ("They're just like spells, only you don't have to keep memorizing them.").

A few days ago, Nissa's mistress vanished without word or warning and still hasn't come back. Pandora *will* come back—an accident of experimentation

catapulted her into another plane of existence. In the meantime, Nissa has been left unattended, with nothing but a couple of *wizard locked* doors between her and a forbidden laboratory full of tantalizing magical doodads.

She found a way in, of course, and she found a cache of items no one was ever meant to get into: cursed magic.

Nissa hasn't exactly been herself lately. She escaped all the deadliest effects of her curiosity, but she is still wearing a *ring of contrariness.* Its influence has turned her into quite a little nuisance.

Theft and Pursuit

The questions Nissa asks the PCs in the armory are all of the "hero worship" sort, designed to put them at ease. She's hanging around because, when she saw the PCs earlier, she thought they might be the sort of people who carry magical items, and used a *detect magic* spell to verify this. She's fixated on some magical item the PCs are carrying and has decided she wants it for herself. The moment she thinks she can catch its owner off guard, she grabs the item and makes a dash for the door. (Nissa is not normally so larcenous, but yesterday someone reminded her that, "You can't just take things from people," and the *ring of contrariness* has perverted this instruction.)

Nissa: AL NG; AC 9; MV 12; W1; hp 4; THAC0 23 (22 normally); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type −1; S 3 (5 normally), D 15, C 7, I 19, W 7, Ch 14; immune to all first-level illusions; ML 10; *amulet of inescapable location, ring of contrariness* with *spell turning* ability, *ring of free action, wand of wonder* with 50 charges remaining, keys to Pandora's home.

Nissa has all the youthful enthusiasm of an adventurer in the making. She's already done all the spell-casting she can for the day (the *detect magic* spell she used on the PCs). Her reduced strength is the work of a *curse* from a *flask of curses* she opened when she explored Pandora's laboratory.

While Nissa has always been rather cocky, the influence of the *ring of contrariness* has turned her self-assurance into a mild case of megalomania. This will last only as long as she wears the ring, but for now she's given to grandstanding and melodramatic speeches—from a safe distance, that is, as her megalomania doesn't extend to the delusion that she's physically powerful. She simply believes she can out-think anybody. She babbles flowery speeches to that effect at the drop of a hat, and lets go with her best maniacal laugh (not a very good one) every time she outmaneuvers a PC.

Just as Nissa runs out of the shop with a PC's magical item, her friend Heather comes in. PCs rushing after Nissa must make a dexterity check on 5d6 or trip over Heather in the middle of the doorway, creating a terrible tangle and giving Nissa all the head start she needs to escape. Nissa knows the streets well, and the shelter of her mistress's lab isn't far. Swift PCs may be able to keep her from evading them completely, but she reaches the lab and locks the door behind her before they can actually reach her. The streets are crowded and twisting, so no pursuer ever has a clear shot long enough to target her with spells or ranged attacks of any kind.

Heather, meanwhile, is busy begging the angry party of adventurers not to hurt Nissa, running to keep up with them if necessary and babbling all the while. If the PCs let her get a word in edgewise, she'll tell them what she knows: Something awful's happened to Nissa since her mistress disappeared, and she's not acting like herself at all. Heather thinks Nissa has been possessed by an evil spirit and needs someone to rescue her. She begs the PCs to do just that.

Heather is Nissa's best friend, a local street urchin who believes with all her heart in Nissa's claims to a heroic destiny. Heather plans to claim her own little piece of greatness by acting as Nissa's sidekick. If the party loses Nissa before she reaches the lab, Heather will lead them there if they promise to try to save Nissa.

Heather is a neutral-good, zero-level human child with 3 hp, no exceptional statistics, and no weapons or armor of any kind.

Pandora's Lab

The home of Nissa's mistress is a single-story building of sturdy stone construction with a 40'-high circular tower built onto it. The doors are of stout oak, the windows all shuttered and bolted. The windows in the tower are shut and *wizard locked.*

There are two doors to the building: the front door and a side door. The former faces the main street and opens into area A, while the latter opens into area B from a side alley.

While not a very impressive edifice for a mage of Pandora's stature (she's 14th level), the building is just large enough to suit her needs and not so large that it attracts undue attention. Pandora keeps most of her valuables safely stored elsewhere, so she doesn't have to be bothered with complex security systems in her home.

All *phase doors* (numbered circles) shown on the map were cast by Nissa with the help of a *book of infinite spells.* The number of charges left on each door at the start of the adventure is shown on the map.

A. Sitting Room. This room is furnished with a comfortable couch and a few padded chairs, all upholstered in wine-red velvet. The stone walls are covered with simple tapestries to add a further touch of warmth and color.

The closet to the east holds only a couple of traveling cloaks, one each for Nissa and Pandora.

B. Kitchen. This simply furnished kitchen is a mess of dirty dishes and utensils left lying about.

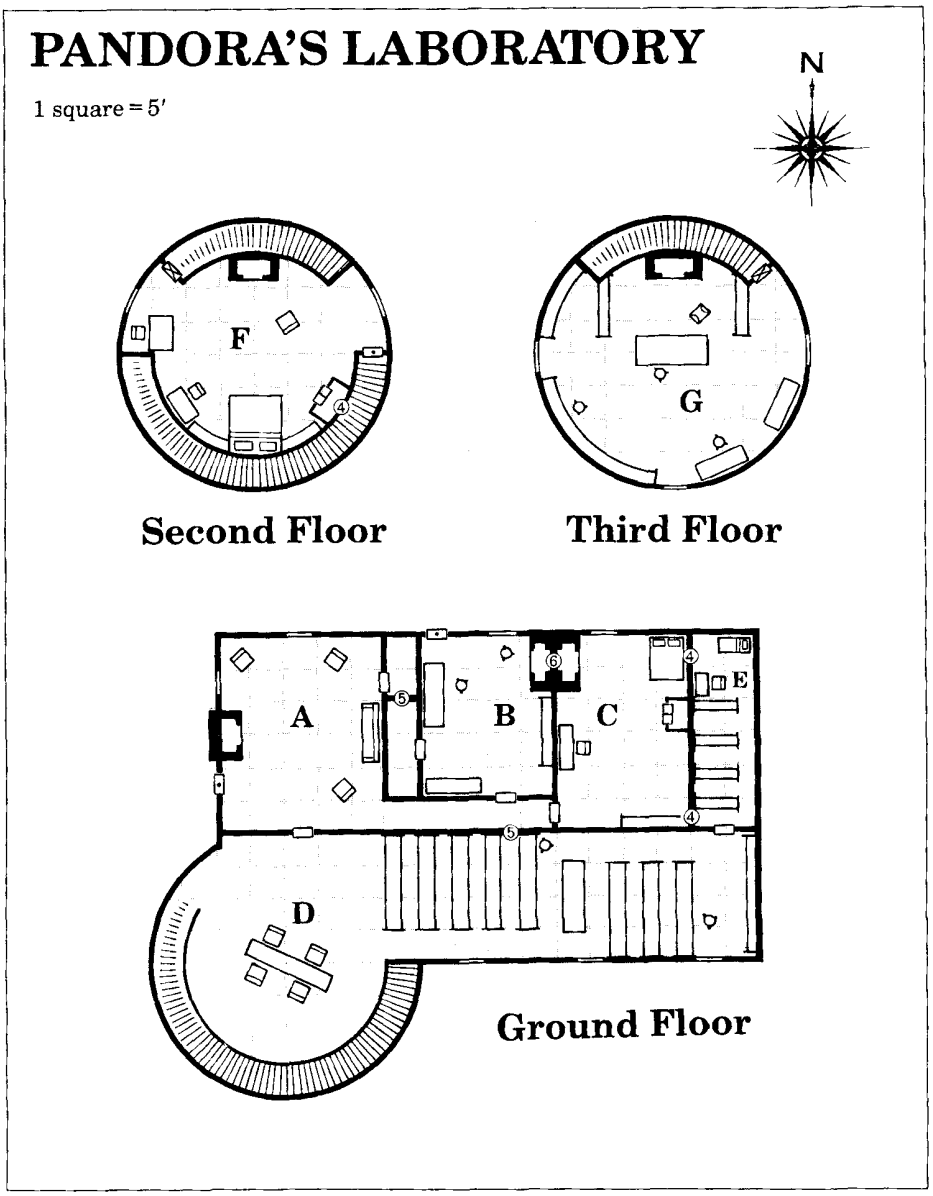
The closet to the west is a pantry. It still contains a fair amount of foodstuffs but has obviously not been restocked recently.

C. Guest Room. This bedroom is comfortably but plainly furnished. The only signs of habitation are the mussed bedclothes (Nissa slept here one night for fun).

D. Library. The shelves in this room are well stocked with books on a wide variety of subjects. Aside from the texts of magical studies basic to Pandora's research, the majority of the books discuss philosophy and sociology.

E. Library Annex. This room serves double duty as an expansion to the library and a cubbyhole bedroom and study. The shelves that take up most of the room are filled with neglected, dusty tomes. A clutter of books and papers covers the desk at the south end of the room. The bed beside it lies rumpled and unmade.

The books here are the dregs of Pandora's library—the books she never



refers to. None of them contain anything that could be mistaken for useful information.

The bed and desk are Nissa's. The papers on her desk are covered with meaningless sketches and scribbles—her own way of keeping private notes. Even if they could be deciphered, they are just a collection of incomplete thoughts arranged in no particular order. Even to a *comprehend languages* spell, the papers appear as a random collection of words and phrases. Nissa uses the scribbles like key words to recall thoughts from her subconscious.

The desk's single drawer contains Nissa's personal book of spells, including *cantrip, detect magic, enlarge, identify, read magic,* and *reduce* (reversed *enlarge*).

F. Pandora's Bedroom. This room is furnished with a fine canopied bed, a good leather-upholstered armchair, a writing desk, a vanity, and a stout oaken wardrobe. Everything here is neat and orderly, other than a few innocuous books and papers left lying about.

G. Laboratory. The top floor of this tower is obviously a wizard's work area, filled with work tables, laboratory glassware, and shelves of reference books.

A *book of infinite spells* lies open to a *phase door* spell on the 17th of its 22 pages. An open iron trunk sits on the floor nearby, its former contents left scattered carelessly about: the remains of a *broom of animated attack* that's been splintered to kindling, a *brazier of sleep smoke,* a *flask of curses* (already open and empty), and a *mirror of opposition* lying face down on the floor.

Nissa originally bypassed the *wizard locked* door to this room by using a *reduce* spell to diminish her already slight frame. She climbed the chimney that connects the fireplace here with the one in the bedroom below (area F). She left by a *phase door* that she's since used up, and she no longer comes to this room.

When Nissa first found it, the *book of infinite spells* was open to a *monster summoning* spell. The pair of ogres she conjured up splintered the broom when it animated, then made short work of Nissa's evil twin when she emerged from the mirror. Fortunately for all concerned, neither of the ogres was reflected in the mirror before Nissa dropped it face down. The ogres disappeared when the summoning's duration ended.

There were no coals in the room to let Nissa experiment with the brazier on her first visit, so by the time she got around to it, she'd already set up her *phase door* exit. Wary from her earlier troubles, she used a *cantrip* to light the brazier from a distance and thus escaped its *sleep* smoke. When the conjured fire elemental attacked her, she fled through the *phase door,* and the elemental went home in a huff.

Nissa didn't escape the *flask of curses.* Its effects are noted in her statistics.

Nissa's Tactics

Once Nissa reaches the safety of her home, she hides in the closet off the sitting room (area A) with the door cracked open, waiting to see if the PCs break into the house. She's an inexperienced thief, and she realized belatedly that it wasn't a very smart move to run straight home with her prize. Her only plan now is to ward off intruders with her *wand of wonder,* using the *phase*

doors she set up on a lark as secret escape hatches that allow her to fire once then quickly retreat to set up her next ambush.

Remember to take into account the *spell turning* ability of the *ring of contrariness* for any spells cast at Nissa, and to exploit the comic possibilities of a child under the influence of a *ring of contrariness.*

Play up the humorous effects of the *wand of wonder,* and reroll or reinterpret deadly effects so that they do minimal damage. A *fireball,* for example, might be downgraded to a quick burst of flame that singes the targets' hair and clothes but causes only 1-2 hp damage to the PCs themselves. Another option would be rewriting the table for Nissa's *wand of wonder,* replacing the deadly effects with results intended to give your PCs fits. If you wish to rewrite the table, the "Wild Surge Results" table in the *Tome of Magic* (pages 7-8) provides excellent inspiration for alternate effects, as does the *wand of wonder* described in the module T1-T4 *The Temple of Elemental Evil.* All effects should be either temporary or easily dispelled by an apologetic 14th-level wizard whom the PCs may encounter in the near future (Pandora, when she gets home).

Think of this adventure as the AD&D game meets *Home Alone.* The idea is to have harmless (or at least nonlethal) fun frustrating the PCs until they either figure out how to surround Nissa or force her into using up her *phase doors.* Once she's cornered, wrestling her to the ground and retrieving the stolen magical item should be no problem. Freeing her from the *ring of contrariness,* however, could prove quite difficult, thanks to its *spell turning* ability. It may take several *remove curses* to accomplish the job, as described in the ring's entry in the *Dungeon Master's Guide.*

Nissa doesn't make the job of removing the ring easy, either. Once captured, she screams, shouts, bites, and kicks while trying to get free, alternately cursing the PCs and promising them grand favors ("I'll let you be my sidekicks!") if they'll let her go. If left free and still under the power of the ring, however, she's sure to track down the PCs wherever they go and arrange a number of nasty practical jokes against them as her revenge for indignities suffered and property stolen (if any).

Unless the PCs can cast *remove curse* themselves, seeing to Nissa's cure could provide a good headache for the party, though not nearly as much of one as leaving her unattended. Unless she is bound, gagged, and bundled through the streets after dark, any attempt to get the struggling girl to a temple for help attracts both crowds and constables.

By this time, though, Nissa is so incoherent with rage that no town watchman could mistake her for an ordinary kidnap victim—she yells at the officers as well as the PCs. If the situation is explained, a few watchmen will insist on escorting the PCs and Nissa to the temple in question, but they won't have the least desire to hassle the party for fear of having to shoulder the burden of looking after the little terror themselves.

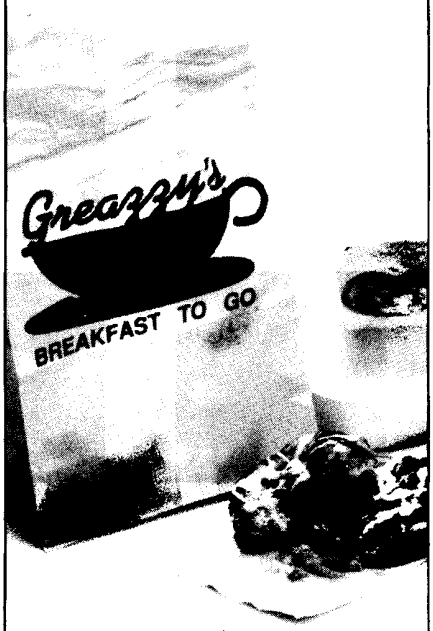
Concluding the Adventure

If freed from her curse, Nissa immediately becomes very quiet and uncertain, exchanging wide-eyed glances with everyone present while she tries to figure out what possessed her to act so atrociously. Finally, all she manages to say is a sheepish, "Sorry," and a half-mumbled, "You can still be my sidekicks if you want." She'd like to offer the PCs some sort of reward for their efforts, but other than her spell book (which she would never part with) she owns nothing more valuable than the clothes on her back. All her magical items really belong to Pandora.

Nissa would certainly allow PCs to copy any spells they like from her spell book to help make up for the trouble she put them through, but she won't think to offer this herself. She really is in awe of the party and doesn't for a minute believe she could have anything in her modest book of spells that would interest real adventurers.

Pandora returns the day after the adventure and reimburses the PCs for any expense they incurred to free Nissa from her curses, tracking them down to do so if necessary. If the PCs didn't cure Nissa, she'll see to the job herself.

Pandora may make any wizard spells you wish available for PCs to copy into their spell books as a reward (if they deserve one) for trying to help Nissa. On the other hand, if the PCs harmed Nissa or made off with any of Pandora's books or magical items, they'll soon have an angry 14th-level wizard to answer to. Ω



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HORROR'S HARVEST

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

Never try to catch a falling star.

Artwork by P. L. Wolf

Christopher writes: "I was ten years old when I first saw Invasion of the Body Snatchers *(the 1970s remake), and it scared my socks off. Of all the monsters in my youth, the creatures that sprouted from those pods were certainly the most terrifying of all sinister creations. And* they *looked perfectly normal."*

Something evil has come to Delmunster. It has no name. It has no fear. It has nothing but a tireless hunger. It has insinuated itself into the lives of the citizens, yet no one knows what it is or where it dwells. The village madman runs screaming through the local tavern shouting "There's evil in the woods!" but no one heeds the lunatic's warning. The village priest locks himself in his church with no explanation. Peculiar things are happening to the people of the sleepy little village. They're changing in ways even their families cannot explain. They're becoming something else, and they'll never be the same again. In fact, things have never been quite the same since the night the comet fell from the sky.

"Horror's Harvest" is an AD&D® game RAVENLOFT® adventure for 4-8 player characters of levels 2-4 (about 18 total levels). At least one PC should possess a magical weapon. The module is set in the domain of Falkovnia, which is described on pages 69-70 of the RAVENLOFT rules supplement. Any DM™ who has the RAVENLOFT appendix to the *Monstrous Compendium* should review the information on the doppleganger plant before beginning play. For DMs without this resource, information on the doppleganger plant is given within this adventure.

Experience point values are given for all NPC villagers, regardless of alignment. See "Concluding the Adventure" for guidelines on how to award experience points in this module.

Adventure Background

The astronomer Thull Arksum was looking through his telescope and charting the constellations on the night a falling star raced across the heavens and vanished beyond the distant horizon. That stellar event was 10 days ago. Ten days and 100 calculations later, Thull has determined the approximate location of the fallen star. He would certainly be the envy of the sage community if he could recover the comet for

more intensive study, but even Thull Arksum would leave the mysterious comet in its place if he knew what evil power it contained.

Yuri Karloff, the burgomaster of Delmunster, was asleep when the fiery comet plunged from the night sky and punched a hole through his roof. Awakened by the thunderous crunch of shingles and the rattle of furniture, Yuri cautiously searched his house for the cause. Only when he found the smoldering comet amid the wreckage of his workroom did a sinister fear creep over him.

The comet was a spherical black rock about 1' in diameter, burned and cracked. A sticky, milky substance oozed from the cracks, gripping the worried burgomaster with disgust and horror. Yuri Karloff knew an evil omen when he saw one. Beneath night's grim darkness, he buried the comet deep in the woods behind his house where it would never be found again. But evil things have a way of coming back to haunt the innocent.

In the dark hours before the dawn, a plant of insidious intelligence sprouted from the earth in the woods behind the burgomaster's manor. Hidden within the gluey secretions of the comet, insulated from the heat, was a black bulb. Once the comet had cooled, the bulb worked its way into the surrounding soil and silently grew into a sprawling plant with several coffin-sized pods.

When the citizens of sleepy Delmunster awoke the next morning, the world seemed perfectly normal. While rumors circulated concerning the hole in the burgomaster's roof, no one predicted the horrible evil that had staked its claim in the nearby woods.

Beginning the Adventure

The PCs begin the adventure with an invitation to Thull Arksum's star tower, a three-story cylinder of vine-covered stone capped with a hollow wooden dome. The PCs find Thull inside this dome, fiddling with the crystal lenses of a large wooden telescope. As the PCs enter, a lens slips from the sage's grasp and shatters on the stone floor. With an echoing "Blast!" Thull curses the crystal shards and turns toward the PCs, almost forgetting why he invited them in the first place.

> Thull Arksum is a frail-looking man with red-rimmed eyes and a long white beard. A small white cap covers his balding head, and golden spectacles cling to the bridge of his long, hooked nose. His voice, although weak, is amplified in the hollow interior of the tower dome.
>
> "Ten days ago, just as I predicted, a comet fell from the sky. Even as it raced through the darkness and plunged beyond the horizon, I found myself calculating its precise destination—a very complex task, let me tell you. The exploration of such phenomena has intrigued me since I was a foolish boy. Now, at long last, the opportunity to recover a fallen star exists. I implore you to find the comet and bring it back to my tower for further study. I have calculated the comet's approximate coordinates, and I am willing to pay for your services in advance."

Thull offers the party 200 gp to recover the fallen star, but he is willing to pay up to twice that amount for its return. He requires that the party move hastily, for he has already wasted too much time deducing the star's location.

Thull Arksum: AL LG; AC 10; MV 9; 0-level human; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; I 18, W 15, C 13; ML 10. Thull wears a white robe with golden embroidery (120 gp), and a gold chain (25 gp) with a magnifying lens attached to it (90 gp). His golden spectacles (150 gp) allow him to *read magic* and *identify* (as a 1st-level wizard).

Thull draws a map for the PCs, marking the approximate location of the fallen comet with respect to his tower (a simple sketch of the map provided in this adventure will suffice). Thull points out the proximity of the comet to the nearby village of Delmunster. In actuality, the map is not altogether correct; the star landed within the community, not five miles northwest of it. Obviously, Thull mucked up a few calculations!

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

When Yuri Karloff buried the comet in the woods behind his house, he unleashed a botanical nightmare upon the village of Delmunster. The comet was simply an incubator for the small bulb hidden within. After breaking through the comet's brittle shell, the bulb sprouted wildly in the alien soil, spurred by mysterious radiation emanating from the comet itself. Now, a doppleganger plant resides in the forest behind the burgomaster's house. But the horror does not end there.

The doppleganger plant is already full-sized and has 16 pods. So far, it has enslaved only 10 villagers (two of whom have recently died). The "Delmunster Resident Roster" lists all of the village's NPCs. Those NPCs marked with asterisks (*) have been transformed into podlings and behave as described in areas A to Q. The doppleganger plant and the comet are described in "The Comet Site."

The doppleganger plant has limited its feeding to Delmunster because it needs minions close by to defend it from would-be attackers. Once the plant's podlings are strong enough and numerous enough, the plant will send its weaker minions abroad to lure more powerful individuals into the range of its mind bondage attack.

When the PCs arrive in Delmunster, they meet two kinds of people: friendly villagers and suspicious ones. NPC podlings are generally quite friendly and approachable, hiding their true selves under a facade of openness to make unwary visitors feel welcome. Visitors who feel welcome will be encouraged to stay and spend the night, which is what the parent plant desires.

The suspicious people are usually those who suspect something is terribly wrong but have not themselves succumbed to the mind bondage power of the doppleganger plant. Some of them have sensed an evil force reaching out to them in their sleep, but they cannot identify the evil and thus regard everyone and everything with suspicion.

As each day passes, the doppleganger plant enslaves another individual. While this process is usually random, the plant can choose its victims based on information received from its podlings. The party's arrival in Delmunster attracts not only the podlings' attention, but also the attention of the parent plant.

If a healthy PC falls asleep or is rendered unconscious, there is a chance that the plant will try to use its mind bondage power on him or her (any PC within 16 miles of the parent plant is susceptible). However, the plant has also recognized several other Delmunster NPCs as "desirable" and will try to enslave them as well. To determine whom the plant attacks in any given round, the DM should roll on the

Delmunster Resident Roster

Key	Structure Type	NPCs Present	Sex	Race	Cl/Lvl	THAC0	hp	AC	AL
A	Wooden Store	Solomon Wulch*	M	Hu	none	20	1	8	CE
		Myrna Wulch*	F	Hu	none	20	2	10	CE
B	Wooden Church	Father Ethen Brume	M	Hu	P3	20	13	10	LG
		Umburrow* (dead)	M	Hu	none	nil	—	—	—
		Jorgi Gudenheit	M	Hu	P1	20	5	10	LG
D	Wooden House	Lukas Feister	M	Hu	none	20	5	9	CN
E	Wooden House	Kjell Lumpenstein*	M	Hu	none	20	3	10	CE
		Stella Lumpenstein*	F	Hu	W2	20	4	10	CE
F	Stone House	Klaus Unger* (dead)	M	Hu	none	nil	—	—	—
		Kayla Unger	F	Hu	none	20	2	10	LG
G	Wooden House	Erdella Ludder	F	Hu	none	20	6	10	LG
		Karl Ludder	M	Hu	none	19	7	7	CG
		Kent Ludder	M	Hu	none	19	5	7	CG
H	Wooden House	"Mad" Rupert Morten	M	Hu	none	20	5	10	CN
I	Wooden House	Garth Klunker	M	Hu	none	20	6	10	N
		Zelda Klunker	F	Hu	none	20	3	10	N
J	Stone Tavern	Frantisek Zevendorf	M	Hu	T5	18	21	6	NE
	(The Giggling	Luther Kragula	M	Dw	F2/T3	19	17	5(4)	NE
	Gargoyle Inn)	Vera Longdagger	F	Hu	T2	20	10	8	CN
		Stump	M	Hu	none	20	4	10	CN
		Ludwig Vanderleden*	M	Hu	B5	18	18	7	CE
K	Wooden House	Ezra Crumsen	F	Hu	none	20	4	10	LG
L	Wooden House	Gyorgi Zagorovich8	M	Hu	none	20	2	10	CE
		Else Zagorovich	F	Hu	none	20	4	10	LG
		Peter Zagorovich	M	Hu	none	20	5	9	CG
		Victor Zagorovich	M	Hu	none	20	2	10	LG
M	Stone Barracks	Aleister Slodoski	M	Hu	F5	16	33	4	N
		Hans Slodoski	M	Hu	F3	18	21	5	N
		Militia Soldiers (4)	M	Hu	F2	19	10	6	N
N	Stone Smithy	Wolfgar Kueller	M	Hu	F2	19	15	8(2)	CG
		Helmut Gorsht	M	Hu	none	20	5	6	CG
O	Wooden House	Liev Toscenu	M	Hu	none	20	5	7	NG
		Katarin Toscenu*	F	Hu	W4	19	6	8	CE
Q	Wooden House	Ferenc Wichtenstein	M	Hu	none	20	5	10	LG
		Gretel Wichtenstein	F	Hu	none	20	4	10	LG
		Leila Wichtenstein	F	Hu	none	20	4	10	LG
		Lotta Wichtenstein*	F	Hu	none	20	1	10	CE
	Rook Hill Manor	Yuri Karloff	M	Hu	T8	17	41	7	CN

* These townspeople have been transformed into podlings. The statistics given are for their current forms. All podlings lose 1-4 hp per day due to the doppleganger plant's feeding. The DM should keep track of any deaths.

"Random Victim Determination" table (see sidebar).

Locating the Comet

If the PCs explore the comet crash site indicated on Thull's map, they will find no trace of the fallen star (after all, it isn't there). The search takes the party into the dark heart of the Vigila Dimorta, or "sentries of death," a dense wood of towering black trees. The PCs must spend at least two days scouring the woods for the comet before they can be certain Thull's predictions are faulty.

The party may decide to spend their nights in the woods (where they are left to the mercy of wolves, will o'wisps or worse), or they can find sanctuary in nearby Delmunster. In either case, they are vulnerable to the doppleganger plant's attack.

Once the PCs are certain that Thull's calculations are incorrect, the next logical step would be to enquire about the falling star in Delmunster, if the PCs have not done so already. Although the burgomaster is the only resident who has actually seen the comet, there are rumors circulating around the community suggesting that a comet may have crashed nearby. The "Rumors in Delmunster" table provides a list of the town's darkest secrets and lies. Most NPCs know at least one rumor, determined by rolling 1d20. Podlings know all the rumors and may freely select which ones they wish to tell (preferably "red herrings" to keep the PCs preoccupied or confused).

Eventually, the PCs' search should lead them to the burgomaster's manor atop Rook Hill. Within the manor, the PCs may find clues leading to the comet's location and the evil doppleganger

plant. Unknown to the party or the villagers, however, exposure to the comet's radiation has made the burgomaster dangerously insane.

The PCs may suspect from the moment they enter the village that the comet landed within the hilltop manor (its foreboding appearance coupled with the hole in the roof are early indications that all is not right with the burgomaster). Because the parent plant can vaguely sense the arrival of any new life forms within 16 miles of its location, its podlings will be alerted even before the PCs arrive. Podlings will position themselves to keep the PCs away from the manor, fearing that the burgomaster might divulge the doppleganger plant's location (the podlings have found the burgomaster too powerful and well-guarded to eliminate, and they're not about to call upon outsiders to lend a helping hand). Their tactics are as subtle and sinister as the parent plant itself:

- Podlings approach the PCs when they first arrive, asking them to help cure Lotta Wichtenstein's "illness" (see area Q) and, failing that, help coax the town priest out of his church (area B). This distraction should give other podlings time to set up additional decoys.
- A podling claims that the burgomaster was seen carrying several pieces of charred rock into town early one morning, but no one is certain where he was going (or the podling could give a false location). This should get the PCs scouring the village for clues (a difficult task, considering the paranoia of its inhabitants). The most insidious podlings will even leave false clues that lead the heroes to an incorrect burial site (or sites), perhaps well beyond the village perimeter (Solomon Wulch, the storekeeper from area A, leaves a muddy shovel somewhere in the village, while another podling writes cryptic, misleading "clues" on stable walls and tombstones).
- The podlings arrange a more pressing mystery, such as the theft of a PC's weapon followed by the sudden reappearance of that weapon in the back of a murdered villager (podlings are not averse to sacrificing innocent villagers, being mere pawns themselves). The weapon in question could be purloined from the PC's room at the local inn, or by a successful pick-pockets roll (the inn's resident bard and podling, Ludwig, has the necessary skills). Incarcerating the suspected PC is a task for the town militia, whose involvement could create complications. Any PC forced to spend a night in jail is ripe pickings for the doppleganger plant.
- Podlings try to isolate and incapacitate a PC, then hide the unconscious PC somewhere in the village or nearby woods (the victim is bound, gagged, and left in the custody of a podling or *charmed* NPC). Locating the missing adventurer should keep the other party members quite busy. If capturing an adventurer would be difficult, seizing and hiding his equipment might prove easier (and would keep the party just as occupied). Remember that an unconscious party member is susceptible to the doppleganger plant's mind bondage attack.
- A podling wizard *charms* an innocent villager and use that villager to lead the PCs astray by providing false clues about the comet's location or diverting their attention to more "pressing" problems. The podlings could, for example, *charm* Mad Rupert (area H) or the Ludders (area G) into leading the PCs on a futile werewolf hunt deep in the woods (but still within range of the doppleganger plant's mind bondage attack).
- A podling or *charmed* villager carrying a spherical chunk of rock (not the comet) is seen fleeing into the woods or skulking around the village. The culprit leads the PCs on a merry chase down a boobytrapped path. A real person is not even needed; the rock-carrier could be nothing more than a *phantasmal force* created by Ludwig the bard (area J) or Katarin Toscenu (area O). Both podlings have *invisibility* spells to conceal themselves.

The DM should feel free to create even more insidious schemes, keeping in mind that podlings are of genius intelligence and are in constant contact with the parent plant. Even if all the podlings' tactics fail and the PCs reach the hilltop manor, there is no guarantee the adventurers will find what they're looking for. Yuri Karloff knows where the comet is hidden but may flee the manor before revealing this information (see "Rook Hill Manor," area 14). Yuri might hide somewhere in the village and, if wounded, could be captured (or killed) by podlings.

Handling PC Podlings

When a PC is transformed into a podling, an unusual role-playing dilemma emerges. Should the DM inform the player that his PC has been enslaved and that the player is no longer in control of the PC's actions? Should the player continue to role-play the PC as a podling, or should the DM (as the parent plant) usurp control of the PC?

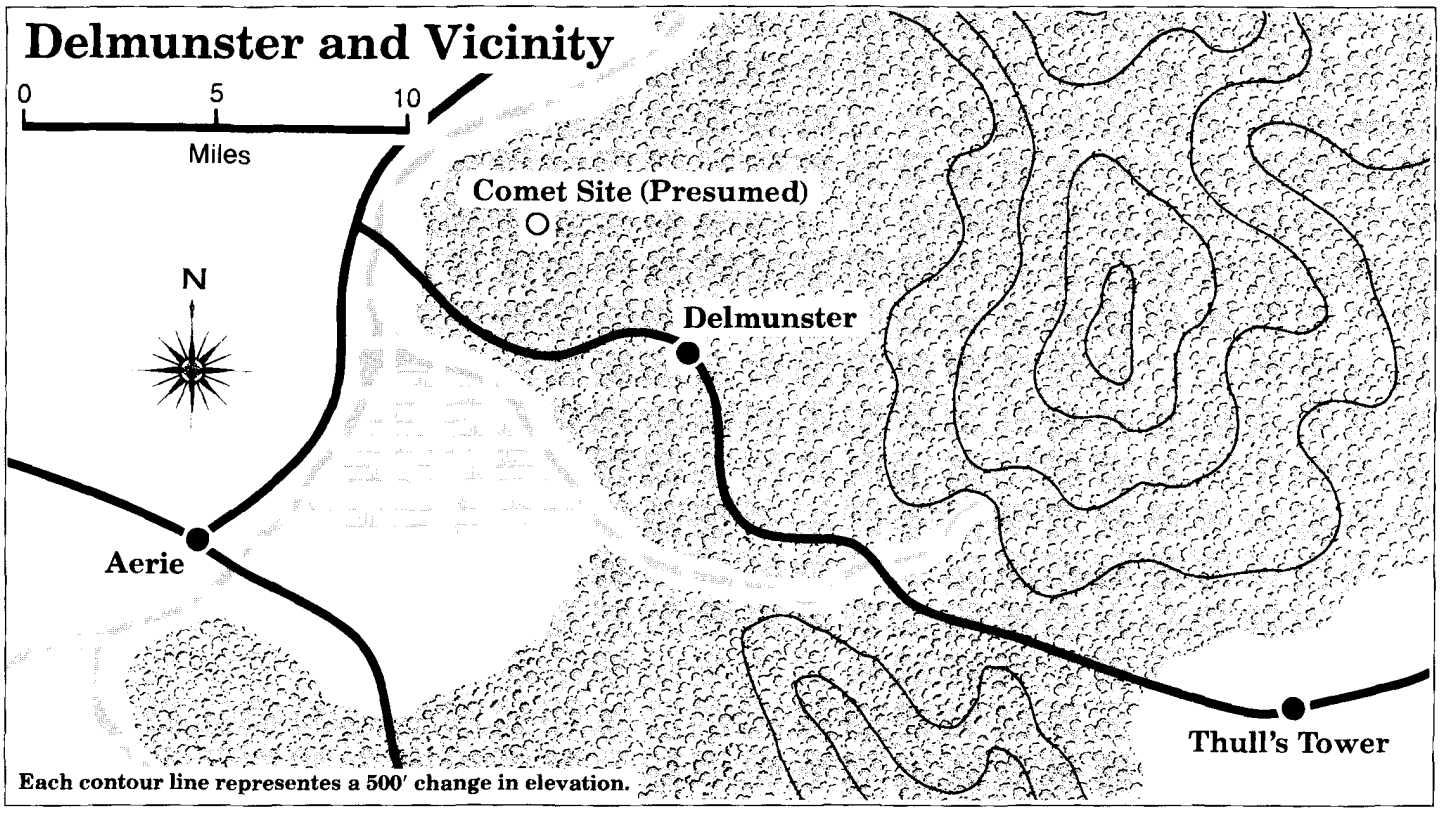
A dedicated role-player may welcome the challenge of playing a podling. Once the PC has succumbed to the doppleganger plant, the DM should take the player aside and tell him that an "evil intelligence" has taken over his PC. The DM should also tell the player that his PC no longer has the desire or need for food, drink, or sleep. The player can play his PC as he sees fit, so long as he abides by three restrictions:

- He cannot reveal to the other players that his PC has become chaotic evil and is under the control of an evil force.
- He cannot intentionally or willfully drop hints that expose the truth concerning his PC (remember, the plant has genius intelligence).

Random Victim Determination

d100	Selected Victim*
01-06	Father Ethen Brume (area B)
07-10	Lukas Feister (area D)
11-13	Karl Ludder (area G)
14-16	Kent Ludder (area G)
17-18	"Mad" Rupert Morten (area H)
19-21	Garth Klunker (area I)
22-28	Frantisek Zevendorf (area J)
29-35	Luther Kragula (area J)
36-38	Vera Longdagger (area J)
39-41	Stump (area J)
42-43	Ezra Crumsen (area K)
44-52	Aleister Slodoski (area M)
53-60	Hans Slodoski (area M)
61-66	Militia soldier (area M)
67-70	Wolfgar Kueller (area N)
71-72	Liev Toscenu (area O)
73-74	Ferenc Wichtenstein (area Q)
75-00	Player character (DM's choice)

* A saving throw vs. spells is allowed to resist the mind bondage power of the doppleganger plant. If the first victim makes the save, the plant will attempt to enslave another victim the following round.



• He must fulfill every desire of the "evil force" (as dictated by the DM) without question or hesitation.

A particularly insidious player will play the podling to the hilt, doing whatever it takes to alleviate suspicion. Nevertheless, the DM is still obligated to point out obvious differences at appropriate times ("Jurgen has not eaten much lately, and he is visibly losing weight.").

But won't the other players suspect something the moment the DM drags their buddy aside to tell him about his PC's secret transformation? The answer is yes, but the other players' suspicions can be put to rest with some clever scheming. The DM could write some gibberish on a scrap of paper ("Look for the white stone, then walk 40 paces due west, 30 paces due north, and feed the hollow tree"). When the DM takes the player aside to tell him what has befallen his PC, he gives the player this slip of paper. When the player returns to the group, he could say that his PC has found a scrap of paper with a clue written on it (for dramatic effect, he should keep the paper to himself until he thinks up a story about how and where his PC found it). While the other PCs try to solve the meaningless clue, their fears concerning their fellow PC will dissipate.

But isn't a saving throw a dead giveaway to trouble? The answer is no. Although the PC is entitled to a saving throw vs. spells to resist the doppleganger plant's mind bondage attack, the DM could just as easily say it's an Intelligence check to see if that PC notices something (that he's standing on a certain scrap of paper, for instance).

If the player has no desire to play his PC as a podling, or if the player is role-playing several PCs at once, the DM has two choices. He can take control of the PC immediately or take control whenever the PC's actions diverge from the doppleganger plant's desires ("Jurgen suddenly attacks the rest of the party with his mace!").

The DM can even manipulate a PC podling in subtle, more devious ways ("For some reason, Jurgen cannot remember any of his healing spells!" or "Jurgen is not feeling tired, so perhaps he can take the first watch."). If possible, the DM should leave most of the PC role-playing to the players; after all, there are almost 40 NPCs in the village. The DM has enough to do without having to role-play the PCs as well.

Delmunster

When the sun shines brightly on the autumn trees, and the flowers are in full bloom, Delmunster is a friendly looking place. But when the fog sinks between the hills and the rain pours down from the thunderous sea of black clouds, Delmunster becomes a dark and eerie sight. Its homes can be both quaint and foreboding, cheery and sullen. When the trees are not swaying in the wind, they are bloated with rain and silent. When the sparrows are not chirping merrily on the eaves, the crows are cawing ominously, as if to warn of impending doom. These paradoxes should become evident to anyone who spends several days in the sleepy, sometimes deathlike village.

A. Wulch General Store. This large wooden establishment houses both the store and residence of Solomon and Myrna Wulch, a middle-aged couple who have lived in Delmunster for 45 years. Above the entrance hangs a

wooden sign with the words "Wulch General Store" in Gothic lettering. Both Solomon and Myrna are podlings, despite their outward friendliness to strangers and fellow villagers.

Solomon Wulch, podling: AL CE (LG); AC 8; MV 12; 0-level; hp 1 (7); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 16; ML special; XP 7; pitchfork.

Solomon is tall and balding, with a toothy smile and large handyman's hands. Before he became a podling four days ago, Solomon was overweight. Since his transformation, he has lost not only his bulk but also his foul temper. Solomon was a Falkovnian flagbearer in his younger years but retired from service when he married Myrna.

Myrna Wulch, podling: AL CE (LG); AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 2 (5); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML special; XP 7; knife.

Myrna was friendly even before she became a podling one day ago. She is a small, thin woman with twinkling eyes and a courteous smile, but behind her smile lurks the doppleganger plant's grimace of evil. If asked about her husband's sudden weight loss, Myrna smiles and goes on about his latest diet.

Since they have no desire to sleep, the Wulches spend their nights alone at home, silently playing cards with each other or checking the store inventory. They always encourage visitors to stay in the village for several days, or at least spend the night.

Solomon and Myrna sell all manner of common items (refer to table 44 in the *Player's Handbook,* specifically the Clothing, Daily Food and Lodging, Household Provisioning, and Miscellaneous Equipment lists). The prices are virtually the same as those listed in the *PH.* The Wulches do not sell armor or weapons, although they do have a variety of gardening tools that could double as weapons in times of dire need (sickles, pitchforks, shovels, and the like). They also stock food that the village cannot provide for itself (primarily grains like wheat and corn). Delmunster has many vegetable gardens, but the nearest farmland is located around the distant town of Aerie.

Attached to the front of the general store is a stable containing a horse cart and two draft horses.

Draft horses (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 11 each (15 at full); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SZ L; ML 5; MC1 (Horse).

Rumors in Delmunster

1. The Karloff manor was struck by lightning during a recent thunderstorm. The burgomaster has asked Gyorgi Zagorovich, the village carpenter, to fix the roof. (False)

2. The burgomaster's butler has a face as white and sallow as Death itself. His eyes burn like flaming coals whenever unwanted visitors arrive. (True)

3. Katarin Toscenu is not the woman she used to be. Her foul disposition has changed from unfriendly to kind, and she was seen talking to Stella Lumpenstein, whom she supposedly hates. Even her husband, Liev, is perplexed. (True)

4. Mad Rupert's been hollering about monsters in the woods again. Last time they lived in the trees. This time he says they live in coffins. (True)

5. Solomon Wulch, the storekeeper, has lost a lot of weight in the last several days. He is also much cheerier than he used to be. (True)

6. Stella Lumpenstein is the daughter of a witch. She has cast a horrible spell upon the people of Delmunster, making them perform the darkest deeds. (Only the first statement is true.)

7. Lukas Feister, the village hermit, is hiding something sinister in his house. When asked about it, he simply shrugs his shoulders and walks away. (True)

8. Zelda Klunker tried to murder her husband with a poisoned pie. Poor Garth was bedridden for days, during which time Zelda tried to stab him with a kitchen fork. (False)

9. Erdella Ludder's two sons, Karl and Kent, have never been the same since they went hunting in the woods. They have been seen skulking around the town at night. (False)

10. Lotta Wichtenstein has become suddenly ill. According to her distraught parents, Lotta has virtually wasted away to a shell. Gyorgi Zagorovich also looks rather sick, although he says he is fine. Klaus Unger died of the illness. (True)

11. Delmunster has become the feeding ground for a pack of werewolves. The fearsome shapeshifters have been seen prowling around the cemetery at night. (False)

12. Gyorgi Zagorovich, the local carpenter, is making wooden coffins for everyone in the village. (False)

13. Delmunster is beset by a creature that can change its form. Ezra Crumsen says she knows the identity of the changeling. (False)

14. Strange animal noises have been heard inside the abandoned Grubstein house (next door to the Wichtenstein's). Some say the Grubsteins were taken away in the night by gypsies. (True)

15. Digging noises have been heard behind the Feister house at night, and Lukas has been seen wandering the streets with a bloodied shovel in his hands. (False)

16. Many villagers have seen floating lights in the woods at night. No one knows if they're will-o-wisps or something even more dangerous. (False)

17. Keep an eye on that Luther fellow. He may be part owner of the inn, but he's not what he seems to be. (True)

18. Father Brume locked himself in his church after he was attacked by Umburrow, the town gravedigger. Father Brume thinks other townsfolk are possessed by evil demons. (True)

19. The local blacksmith, Wolfgar, got his leg bitten off by a werewolf. Sometimes, when he's hammering horseshoes, he snarls and bares his teeth just like a werewolf. (False)

20. Kayla Unger's animals mysteriously disappeared two nights ago. Kayla says she saw a hunched shadow creeping behind her stable that very night. (True)

The horses show visible discomfort whenever they are approached by podlings and thus respond poorly to their owners. The Wulches have neglected to feed these beasts for several days, and both horses appear famished and weak.

B. Church. This wooden church has a pitched roof, a tall steeple, and handsome stained-glass windows. The interior smells of incense and is decorated with banners and tapestries. Two rows of sculpted pews fill the congregation chamber, facing the pulpit and altar. Flanking the altar are twin silver braziers (25 gp each). Attached to the church are the private chambers of Ethen Brume (the village priest), Umburrow (the church janitor and local gravedigger), and Jorgi (Father Brume's curate).

Father Brume and Jorgi have been locked inside the church ever since they were attacked by Umburrow six days ago. After transforming Umburrow into a podling, the doppleganger plant ordered the old gravedigger to attack the two priests with a shovel. Umburrow seriously wounded Jorgi but was killed instantly when Father Brume struck him across the skull with a cudgel. Umburrow's corpse still lies in the foyer of the church, draped in a red satin cloth, as neither priest possesses the resolve to move it. The church doors are locked, and Father Brume carries the only key.

Ethen Brume: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; C3; hp 13; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; W 17, Ch 16; ML 10; XP 175; holy symbol, cudgel. Spells: *command* (×2), *cure light wounds, sanctuary; aid, chant, spiritual hammer.*

Lately, Ethen he has become the victim of his own superstition and believes that evil spirits have possessed a number of citizens in the village. (Remember that *know alignment* spells are less effective in the Ravenloft demiplane as they cannot discern good from evil.) Father Brume is wary of all strangers and will not open the church doors for anyone he even remotely suspects may be "possessed."

Jorgi Gudenheit: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; C1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; W 15; ML 9; XP 35; holy symbol. Spells: *command, detect evil, protection from evil.* The wounds inflicted upon Jorgi by Umburrow have been healed by Father Brume.

Ever since Umburrow attacked Jorgi with a shovel, Father Brume has not allowed the young curate to leave the church. Jorgi fears that the villagers may need priestly attention, but he has been unable to convince Father Brume to unlock the church doors.

Umburrow's corpse is a horrible testament of the doppleganger plant's feedings. It is gaunt and shrivelled, and the torso is little more than a hollow cavity. Touching the torso makes it collapse, and any PCs witnessing this sight must make a horror check (see pages 22-24 of the RAVENLOFT rules supplement). There are no wounds on Umburrow's body, but there is a discernable bump on his head (where he was struck by Father Brume's cudgel).

Speak with dead spells will not enable the PCs to communicate with Umburrow; the doppleganger plant not only devoured his body, but his life essence as well. Next to the gravedigger's corpse lies the bloodied shovel he used to attack Jorgi.

C. Cemetery. An unpainted picket fence surrounds this circular burial ground across from the church. Poking out of the earth are 23 tombstones bearing the names of those buried below. One of the graves was only recently filled; when Klaus Unger (area F) died seven days ago, his body was laid to rest here after receiving a final blessing from Father Brume.

Parties unearthing Klaus Unger will find nothing but a husk of the former man. The feeding of the doppleganger plant has left little more than a gutless mockery of the once-respected cobbler. PCs who try to communicate with Klaus via *speak with dead* spells get no reaction. When Klaus died, the doppleganger plant devoured his life essence, leaving nothing behind to communicate with.

Anyone unearthing the coffin of Emily Feister (see area C) will find it completely empty. Several months ago, Lukas Feister extricated his deceased sister and placed her in the attic of his house. Many of the other villagers suspect that Lukas is hiding a dark secret, but they have not yet uncovered the gruesome truth.

D. Feister Residence. The village hermit, Lukas Feister, lives alone in

this ramshackle wooden house. He is a sickly, pallid-skinned man with a chronic cold. Since the death of Emily, his sister and nurse, Lukas has withdrawn from the rest of the community. He usually talks about his sister as if she were still alive, and most of the other villagers pity him.

Lukas Feister: AL CN; AC 9; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 15; ML 10; XP 7; leather armor (not worn), silver-tipped spear (in house).

Lukas grew up in Delmunster with his sister and brother, Jurgen. In his younger days, he had a brief career as a caravan guard. When Jurgen was killed by werewolves four years ago, Lukas lapsed into silent mourning for several months. Only through Emily's care did he recover. Lukas is a skilled bowyer/fletcher and earns just enough to survive.

Hidden in the attic of Lukas' house are the skeletal remains of his sister, Emily, which he removed from the local cemetery (area C). Her bones are neatly placed inside a locked trunk (Lukas wears the key around his neck). Also contained inside the trunk are some of Emily's belongings: a silver necklace with a dove-shaped pendant (35 gp), a ceramic and cloth doll (6 gp), a pair of dirty wool slippers, and an old diary.

Lukas keeps his stable relatively clean and his **draft horse** (hp 12; see area A for complete statistics) fairly well tended.

E. Lumpenstein Residence. Kjell and Stella Lumpenstein live by themselves in this quaint, well-maintained house. All of their children have grown up and left home. Kjell spends most of his time pursuing his hobby as a scrivener (book copier) while Stella, a chandler (candle-maker), earns the rest of their modest income.

Both Kjell and Stella are now podlings. Since their transformation, they have become a happy-go-lucky pair seeking to live life to the full. Despite the many ominous rumors circulating around the village, they are usually seen smiling.

Kjell Lumpenstein, podling: AL CE (LG); AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 3 (7); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; C 16; ML special; XP 7; pitchfork, hand axe (both weapons in shed).

Kjell is a handsome man with a tangle of black hair and bright green eyes. He served in the Falkovnian militia as a young man, later became a herald, and finally found his niche as a scribe. He is eloquent with words and knows several languages (determined by the DM). Sages and librarians often send him books to be copied, which he does for a handsome price (usually 1 sp per page).

Stella Lumpenstein, podling: AL CE (LG); AC 10; MV 12; W2, hp 4 (10); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; I 17, C 17; ML special; XP 65; dagger.

Stella is a beautiful woman with curly black hair and a slender frame. Only the gray streak in her hair and wrinkles in the corners of her dark eyes betray her age.

For years, Stella has endured a sometimes bitter rivalry with Katarin Toscenu. Now that both women are podlings, they get along superbly and even share each other's spell books. Stella, the step-daughter of a Falkovnian witch who was executed by Lord Drakov, typically has the spells *charm person* and *sleep* memorized (which she will use to help create more minions for the doppleganger plant). She also carries a scroll with the spells *invisibility* and *summon swarm* written on it (cast at 3rd level of ability). Stella borrowed the scroll from Katarin Toscenu for emergencies.

The Lumpensteins keep their most precious belongings in a locked trunk in their bedroom. Included with items of personal value is Stella's spell book. The book contains the spells *affect normal fires, burning hands, cantrip, charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, detect undead, hypnotism, identify, protection from evil, read magic, sleep, spook,* and *wall of fog.*

Kjell and Stella have three domestic cats named Pumpkin, Timkot, and Spookles. The cats shun their podling masters, preferring to yowl from the nearby trees. The Lumpensteins also have a pair of starving **draft horses** (hp 10 each; see area A for complete statistics) in the stables.

Domestic cats (3): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 1-5 hp; hp 3 (×2), 2; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1; SA rake with rear claws for 1-2; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ T; ML 8; MC11 (Cat).

F. Unger Residence. The recent and horrifying death of Klaus Unger has left his wife, Kayla, in a state of shock and terror. Before he was transformed into a podling 10 days ago, Klaus was the village cobbler. Kayla, who watched her husband deteriorate before her eyes, has locked herself in the old stone house, fearful that something evil is sucking the life out of the villagers. She has heard that the Wichtenstein's young daughter Lotta (area Q) has the same "disease" that killed her husband.

Kayla Unger: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 7; XP 15; knife, light crossbow (with six bolts).

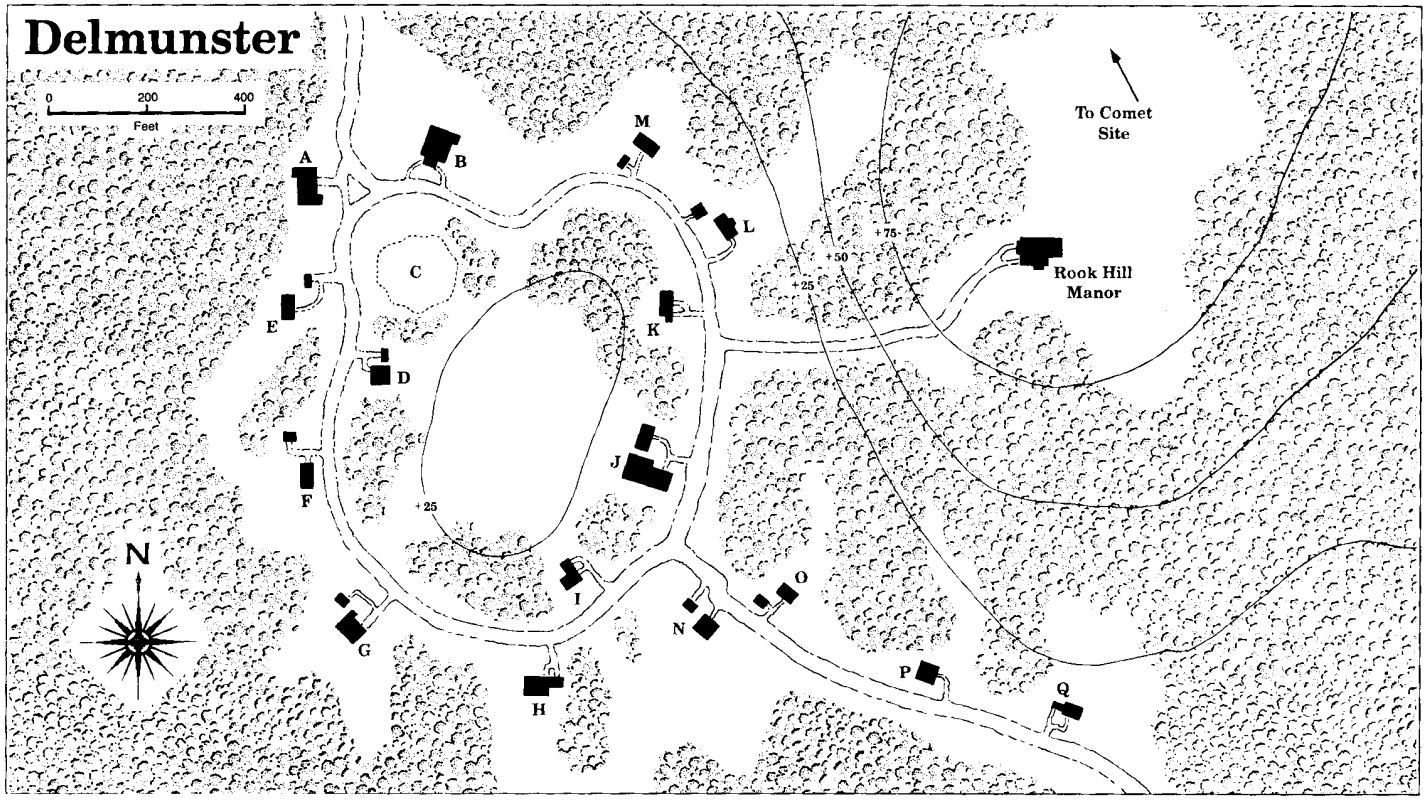
Kayla was, until recently, one of the village's friendlier souls. Her husband's horrible death has left her paranoid and distrustful of others, and she cannot discuss the incident without breaking into tears. The only visitors she allows into her house are Myrna Wulch and Stella Lumpenstein, her sympathetic neighbors. Unknown to Kayla, both women are actually podlings. She will use her husband's crossbow to ward off any unwanted visitors.

Kayla usually keeps a draft horse and a pair of ponies in the stables, but the animals escaped two nights ago. Under a veil of darkness, Solomon Wulch (see area A) freed the animals so Kayla would be unable to leave the village in a hurry. Kayla suspects that Mad Rupert (see area H) is responsible, for he has been seen creeping around the village at night.

G. Ludder Residence. This well-tended wooden house is the residence of Erdella Ludder, a weaver's widow. She lives with her two sons, Karl and Kent. Both brothers are huntsmen who enjoy telling stories about their many dangerous expeditions. They claim to have encountered and wounded a werewolf several weeks ago, although magical scrutiny (such as *detect lie* or *ESP* spells) will reveal that they are lying. Both boys are aggressive and boastful and have a difficult time maintaining friendships (even among themselves). They have laid siege to the local tavern more than once and have broken several pieces of furniture in their mother's home.

Erdella Ludder: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; W 16; ML 10; XP 15; knife.

Although wary of strangers, Erdella shows good manners to those who come as guests. However, she responds very



coldly to anyone who accuses her sons of wrongdoing.

Karl and **Kent Ludder:** AL CG; AC 7; MV 12; 0-level; hp 7, 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17; ML 13; XP 15; ring mail, spear (for boar hunting), short bow.

Karl and Kent are burly lads with strawlike hair and big ears. They plan to enlist in the Falkovnian army next year, when they turn 17 years old.

H. Morten Residence. Rupert Morten, the village madman, lives alone in this weatherworn structure. Years ago, he was cursed by Vistani gypsies for stealing a horse. Since then, he has developed a split personality. The Rupert known to most villagers is paranoid, bordering on hysterical. He often runs from building to building, screaming about werewolves or shapeshifters lurking within the community. Rupert's other personality is more docile. When dominated by this personality, Rupert spends hours tending his flower beds, talking to the plants as if they were his children.

"Mad" Rupert Morten: AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; XP 15; sling, nine stones.

Rupert is a pathetic creature with rotten teeth and unkempt hair. The children of Delmunster call him "Garlic-breath" because he eats garlic bulbs raw (to ward off vampires, he claims). When possessed by his more peaceful personality, Rupert rarely speaks but does not deny the rumors fostered by his more hysterical personality. The calm personality is completely self-absorbed, which is why few people take notice of it.

In either state of mind, Rupert truly believes that some of the villagers are werewolves. He currently suspects Father Brume (area B), Lukas Feister (area D), the Ludder brothers (area G), and Hans Slodoski (area M) of being werewolves, although he has no evidence to support his suspicions (he says he just "knows"). He also thinks Ezra Crumsen (area K) is a tanar'ri in disguise, but that's only because she cracked him over the head with a rolling pin a few years ago.

I. Klunker Residence. This decrepit wooden house is home to Garth and Zelda Klunker. The front porch sags, the building slouches, and the front yard is overcome with weeds. The incessant barking of the Klunkers' five dogs can be heard day and night.

The Klunkers have lived in Delmunster longer than anyone cares to remember. While the other citizens have learned to tolerate their sloppy appearance and habits, only the Wulches (area A), Frantisek Zevendorf (area J), Stump (area J), and the Zagoroviches (area L) have actually befriended them. Garth Klunker is the village leathersmith.

Garth Klunker: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/66; ML 13; XP 7; leather armor (in house), pitchfork, knife.

Garth is a towering, intimidating man with glassy eyes and crooked teeth. His sense of humor can be appalling, at times downright crude, but he makes up for it with sheer presence. He does not trust Lukas Feister (area D) and believes Lukas is responsible for the strange happenings in Delmunster. He is also wary of strangers and does not give much thought to unsubstantiated rumors concerning werewolves and

shapeshifters lurking in the town.

Zelda Klunker: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; XP 7; rolling pin, knife.

Zelda is a rotund and sloppy woman whose cooking is secretly referred to as the "bane of Delmunster." Her infamous dreadroot pie once left her husband and all five dogs bedridden for weeks. The incident has since become the topic of endless discussion at the local inn.

The Klunkers usually keep their five war dogs tied in their backyard. With all the peculiar happenings in the village, however, the dogs (named Sniff, Crudd, Cuddles, Stinker, and Uggh) are now kept inside. They can sense podlings within 30 yards and will viciously attack any who come within biting distance.

War dogs (5): INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M; ML 9; XP 65; MC1 (Dogs). Each dog wears a leather collar tagged with its name.

J. The Giggling Gargoyle Inn. This two-story building is made of dark stone, and smoke always rises from its blackened chimneys. A stone gargoyle clings to the lintel above the main entrance; held in its clutches is a wooden sign that reads "The Giggling Gargoyle Inn."

The tavern is dimly lit by hanging lanterns and blazing hearths, while the establishment takes its name from a 7½'-tall gargoyle statue standing near the wooden stage. The second story of the inn contains spare rooms for guests, while a sagging wooden stable occupies the adjacent lot.

The inn is owned by Frantisek Zevendorf, a human thief, and Luther Kragula, his dwarven partner and longtime companion. Before starting a business of their own, Frantisek and Luther were members of a thieves' guild in Lekar known as the Guildmaster Traders. Later, they worked as assassins and hired henchmen for various merchant guilds. The money spent to build the Giggling Gargoyle Inn was looted from a caravan the two had been assigned to protect. They are both corrupt, cold hearted, and selfish.

Frantisek and Luther maintain a minimal staff (the fewer individuals on the payroll, the better). Vera Longdagger, a brash thief, works as waitress; Stump, a saucy midget, tends bar; and Ludwig Vanderleden, the renowned bard, serves up the nightly entertainment as both musician and jester. Unknown to the other townspeople, Ludwig is actually a podling.

Frantisek Zevendorf: AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; T5; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 18, I 16, Ch 14; ML 11; XP 650; thief skills: PP 85%, OL 55%, FT 50%, MS 72%, HS 49%, DN 25%, CW 90%, RL 25%; *boots of varied tracks,* potions of *speed* and *gaseous form,* nonmagical cloak, dagger.

Frantisek is tall and brooding and always dresses in black. He likes confrontations in which he can make good use of his skill in picking pockets.

Forced into the Falkovnian militia by his pushy uncle, Frantisek learned early in his career that military life was not for him. He was thrown out of the Academy of Arms in Lekar (a Falkovnian city northwest of Delmunster) for stealing a captain's magical sword, an incident that set the foundation for an illustrious thieving career (and left Frantisek with more than a few scars). Frantisek never acquired any fighting mastery, but that sword turned a tidy profit.

Luther Kragula, dwarf: AL NE; AC 5 (4 with magical gauntlets); MV 9; F2/T3; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (×2 backstab); S 16, D 17 (18 with gauntlets), C 16, I 14; ML 13; XP 175; thief skills: PP 15% (25% with gauntlets), OL 43% (53% with gauntlets), FT 35%, MS 7%, HS 5%, DN 10%, CW 47%, RL 0%; leather armor, *gauntlets of dexterity,* two concealed throwing daggers.

Luther passes himself off as a diminutive human to avoid military incarceration (Falkovnian authorities do not treat demihumans well). He shaves his beard and wears boots with tall heels to better conceal his true nature. Interested only in the prosperity of his business, Luther someday plans to kill Frantisek to win the lot. Frantisek is the closest thing Luther has to a friend, but there is no honor among thieves.

Vera Longdagger: AL CN; AC 7; MV 12; T2; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 17, Ch 15; ML 11; XP 65; thief skills: PP 40%, OL 37%, FT 25%, MS 48%, HS 30%, DN 15%, CW 78%, RL 10%; dagger.

Vera knows that Frantisek and Luther have a lot of money invested in the tavern, and she is hoping to secure the establishment for herself some day (how she can accomplish the task without creating too much suspicion is the problem). Despite an addiction to gambling (she has the gambling proficiency), Vera never cheats, preferring to let fate and skill decide the winner. Although she regards her thieving skills as "useful," she rarely relies on them.

Stump (real name **Kullie Durne**): AL CN; AC 10; MV 9; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; XP 7; dagger.

Stump is a small man, barely 5' tall. He is more interested in Vera Longdagger than the business of running a bar. As a thief-in-training, Stump has a 10% chance to open locks.

Stump is a simple man with few concerns or values. He likes gems and jewelry and worships the ground Vera walks on. He is practicing to become a thief some day and even carries around a bag of six different locks that he uses to hone his skill. The keys for the locks have been misplaced.

Ludwig Vanderleden, podling: AL CE (NG); AC 7; MV 12; B5; hp 18 (30); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 17, C 15, I 15, W 12, Ch 16; ML special; XP 650; CW 55%, DN 32%, PP 35%, RL 48%; short sword, lute, ebony flute (15 gp), *boots of elvenkind.* Spells: *change self, phantasmal force, taunt, blur.*

Ludwig is from Borca, located south of Falkovnia, and has been in Delmunster for only six months. He knows very little local lore but knows many songs and jokes, enough to make him Delmunster's one and only entertainer. His disposition has not changed since becoming a podling nine days ago, but he has physically begun to waste away (his naturally thin build and *change self* spell help conceal the signs of wasting). One curious thing about Ludwig is that he never sleeps. He spends his nights in the tavern, playing his lute alone in the darkness.

Ludwig's spell book can magically shrink to fit inside a pocket. The command words to shrink and enlarge the book are "thib" and "thob" respectively. Contained within its pages are the following spells: *cantrip, change self, phantasmal force, taunt, blur, forget, invisibility,* and *mirror image.*

The inn's interior is not detailed in this adventure, but the DM should feel free to invent floorplans and room descriptions. The Giggling Gargoyle Inn has numerous secret passages and corridors that connect the various guest

rooms (allowing Frantisek and Luther to sneak into PC bedchambers). NPCs carry most of their valuable belongings on their persons, leaving very little treasure in their private quarters for pillaging PCs to steal.

The cost to rent a bed for one night is 1 sp (or 2 sp, if the party appears to have lots of money). Rooms contain 1-3 beds, but the rooms are generally quite cramped. Meals are an extra silver piece each, ale must be purchased separately, and stabling a horse costs 1 gp per night. Entertainment is free.

The inn was, until recently, a common meeting place for the local villagers. When the PCs arrive, however, they will find the establishment rather somber and melancholy, especially with Ludwig's haunting melodies playing in the background. Villagers who occasionally frequent the inn include the Ludder brothers (area G), Garth Klunker (area I), the militia soldiers (area M), and Liev Toscenu (area O). Recent events in Delmunster have kept most of the others away.

The inn's stable is a weatherbeaten structure with a sagging roof and rotted wooden walls. Frantisek keeps his medium war horse in one stall, and Stump keeps his pony tethered inside as well. Both animals become visibly uncomfortable in the presence of podlings.

Medium war horse: INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SZ L; ML 7; MC1 (Horse). The war horse's chain mail barding (AC 4) hangs from one wall.

Pony: INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1+1; hp 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ M (4′ high at shoulder); ML 5; MC1 (Horse).

K. Crumsen Residence. Ezra Crumsen, the local schoolteacher and fountain of gossip, lives in this prim and proper wooden house. Flower boxes hang beneath the window sills and an ornate carved-stone birdbath sits in the front yard.

Few people in Delmunster like Ezra Crumsen, but most have learned to tolerate her shrewish meddling. Seldom does something happen in Delmunster that Ezra knows nothing about. She refuses to enter the local tavern because she knows Frantisek and Luther are evil. In fact, Luther has threatened to kill her if she dares come where she is not welcome. Ezra believes that he has "neither the gumption nor the guts" to attack her.

Ezra Crumsen: AL LG; AC 10; MV 9 (due to age); 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; W 16, Ch 15; ML 13; XP 15; arquebus, club.

Ezra Crumsen is a large woman with wispy-white hair, birchwood spectacles, and a walking stick. She is annoyingly persistent when it comes to searching for gossip, and those who do not abide by her beliefs must endure a miserable enmity with the old shrew. Myrna Wulch (area A) and Else Zagorovich (area L) selflessly indulge Ezra's nagging, but few other women can bear her company for very long.

Ezra Crumsen is very suspicious of strangers and will interrogate any newcomers to her community. She truly believes that she alone is responsible for the well-being of Delmunster and thus holds the burgomaster in very low regard. She blames Yuri Karloff for all the current misfortune and does not believe for an instant that his manor was struck by lightning (see rumor #1 on the "Rumors in Delmunster" table). Ezra recalls no thunderstorm that evening, and her memory is supposedly without fault.

Ezra is upset about the mysterious contagion that has infected several of the villagers. She has visited the child Lotta Wichtenstein (area Q), which has only heightened her concern. To avoid catching the foul illness, she has reluctantly spent more time cooped up in her house.

Ezra keeps an arquebus in her house (see page 73 of the *PH* for a description of this device). This unusual weapon was the property of her late husband, a border patrol officer who "acquired" the firearm from a slain foreigner. She will not hesitate to shoot trespassers or thieves she does not recognize.

L. Zagorovich Residence. This comfortable-looking wooden house is home to Gyorgi Zagorovich, the local carpenter, and his family. Unknown to his family and friends, Gyorgi is a podling. He has begun to show visible signs of deterioration, having lost a lot of weight over the last two days. His loving wife, Else, fears that Gyorgi has caught the same sickness as Lotta Wichtenstein (area Q). She also fears for the health of her two sons, Peter and Victor. Peter is a young man with aspirations of becoming a soldier, while Victor is but a 10-year-old child.

Gyorgi Zagorovich, podling: AL CE (LG); AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 2 (7); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, C 15; ML special; XP 7; sickle (in shed).

Before he became a podling three days ago, Gyorgi's family meant everything to him. Now, sadly, he has no feelings for them (although he gives no indication of this).

Although he has started to waste away, Gyorgi claims to be feeling fine. Even his wife will confess that Gyorgi has been nothing but smiles for the last few days. However, he has displayed a few odd behaviors. He rarely sleeps, and when he does he never snores (he usually snores like a bugbear). He spends every waking moment in his shop building all manner of things: wooden dog houses, wooden bird cages, wooden flower boxes, and wooden picture frames for the village burgomaster. Gyorgi seldom stops to eat anymore.

Else Zagorovich: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; XP 7; knife.

Despite Gyorgi's testimony, Else is worried about her husband's health and is terrified about what might happen. She has tried to talk to Father Brume (area B), but he has refused to see her. She has also visited Ezra Crumsen (area K), but Ezra offered little more than sympathy. Else is a fragile woman who devotes herself entirely to her family, and her woman's intuition tells her that something is gravely wrong.

Peter Zagorovich: AL CG; AC 9; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon type; D 15; ML 10; XP 7; short sword.

Peter is a rakish 16 year-old who aspires to be a soldier. He knows that his father has somehow changed and rarely talks to him now.

Victor Zagorovich: AL LG; AC 10; MV 9; 0-level; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; ML 7; XP 0; noncombatant.

Victor idolizes his older brother, and the two get along famously. Victor, too, wants to be a soldier some day, but he has also shown a keen interest in becoming a carpenter. He often makes toys with his father's tools.

The Zagoroviches' stable was destroyed in an unexplained fire one month ago. Gyorgi had just started rebuilding the structure when the doppleganger plant enslaved him. The

stable is currently roofless and consists of four lonely walls.

M. Town Barracks. This ivy-covered building of crumbling stone serves as the barracks for Delmunster's militia. All communities in the Ravenloft domain of Falkovnia have a highly visible military presence, even small villages such as this one. The Falkovnian authorities in charge of this region have left a relatively small detachment of six soldiers to keep the local populace (not to mention visitors) in line.

Aleister Slodoski, Captain of the Guard: AL N; AC 4; MV 9; F5; hp 33; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, Ch 13; ML 14; XP 175; banded mail, long sword.

Aleister Slodoski is a haggard man who has been hardened by many wars with neighboring Darkon. His two eldest sons were killed by Darkon soldiers, and his youngest son (Hans) now serves as his sergeant. Aleister spends many sleepless nights thinking about his dead sons, and he deals with his grief by drinking heavily. The wars taught him to make no friends, so he has none.

Hans Slodoski, Sergeant of the Guard: AL N; AC 5; MV 6; F3; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA two-handed weapon specialization; ML 13; XP 65; scale mail, shield, bastard sword, dagger.

Hans does most of the actual policing in Delmunster. He is hot tempered, impulsive, and quick to make enemies. When he is drunk, he becomes violent and pushy. He likes to show off his swordsmanship, especially to impress good-looking girls.

Militia soldiers (4): AL N; AC 6; MV 6; F2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 35; scale mail, halberd, short sword.

These men are cruel, blank-faced Falkovnian soldiers. They were relocated to this relatively unimportant post because of disorderliness and misconduct. They reluctantly obey their superiors and use any excuse to make life miserable for the villagers and visitors of Delmunster. Their names are Fritz, Otto, Dietrich, and Kristof. Each man carries 3-18 sp and 1-8 gp. This money often changes hands during card games and arm wrestling matches at the local tavern.

The barracks are equipped with two detention cells, each containing a wooden cot and nothing more. The locks on both cell doors are of good quality (−10% to thieves' open-locks rolls). A stable near the barracks holds four heavy war horses. The stable is usually locked to keep out would-be horse thieves (standard-type lock).

Heavy war horses (4): INT animal; AL N; AC 7 (5 with scale barding); MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8/1-8; SA trample for 2-12 hp damage; SZ L; ML 10 (very well trained); MC1 (Horse).

If the PCs annoy or molest any of the villagers, Aleister will make it his business to get to know the party. He assures PCs that any "antics" on their part will not be tolerated (this includes hounding "innocent" villagers, trespassing on the burgomaster's estate, and digging for buried rocks on state or private property without a signed permit). If Aleister or any of his men become podlings during the party's stay, they will use their station as an excuse to keep PCs under lock and key (any excuse will do, such as drawing weapons in a threatening manner, disturbing the peace, or impolite staring).

If the PCs decide to attack the garrison, at least one soldier will try to get away on horseback to alert the militia in distant Aerie. If the soldier gets away, a contingent of 20 or more Falkovnian soldiers bearing an accurate description of the PCs will arrive in Delmunster within 24 hours to search for the party.

N. Kueller Residence and Smithy. Wolfgar Kueller, the local blacksmith, owns both the stone house and the stone smithy on this ragged lot. Wolfgar has lived in Delmunster for 53 years and is not what his neighbors would call a social butterfly. He expects to be left alone and rarely leaves his smithy. He does tolerate his apprentice, Helmut, although he is always yelling at Helmut for something. On a quiet day, his bellows (both the forge bellows and his own shouts) can be heard all over town.

Wolfgar Kueller: AL CG (neutral tendencies); AC 8 (unarmored) or 2; MV 9; F2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/07, D 16, C 16, Ch 13; ML 15; XP 35; chain mail and shield (kept in house), long sword.

Wolfgar is a gray-haired, gray-bearded, grumpy old man with an iron peg where his right foot should be (the foot was bitten off by a worg). The peg hampers his movement only slightly and may be unscrewed. Years of service in the Falkovnian army (as a swordsmith) have taken their toll on Wolfgar, who hates people in general and authority types in particular. He detests the burgomaster and the local militia captain. He does, however, have a soft spot for children. Little Lotta Wichtenstein's mysterious "illness" has left Wolfgar feeling miserable and helpless.

Although he is a skilled armorer and weaponsmith, Wolfgar spends most of the time making horseshoes and other mundane items (nails, shovel heads, chains, and the like). He is impatient and full of curses when it comes to making such common items. He'd welcome anyone with enough money to pay for a nice suit of chain mail or a sword (and would set to work on such items immediately).

Helmut Gorsht: AL CG; AC 6; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/55, D 16, I 9, C 17; ML 12; XP 15; leather armor, battle axe, warhammer.

Helmut is young but not very bright. Nonetheless, he is very good with his hands and has created many horseshoes and weapons of quality workmanship. Wolfgar is like a father to him, and Helmut fulfills his every command to the best of his ability. When he makes mistakes ("Idiot! This is the wrong hammer! Where's your head?"), he immediately strives to correct himself.

The DM may flesh out the contents of Wolfgar's smithy as he sees fit, although there are no magical weapons or armor to be found hanging loosely on the walls. Wolfgar's house is a dilapidated stone structure with blackened chimneys and rain-pocked shingles. The smith makes no attempt to maintain the edifice, and it has become an eyesore to the rest of the community. Of course, Wolfgar could not care less about what the other villagers think.

O. Toscenu Residence. This neat wooden house is occupied by a vintner, Liev Toscenu, and his wife Katarin. Liev, who makes his own wines in his attic, is amiable and mild mannered, while Katarin has a reputation for being a beautiful but barbed-hearted witch.

However, Katarin has not been the same since becoming a podling seven days ago. She is complacent and friendly, and she recently ended a long-standing rivalry with Stella Lumpenstein (also a podling). Liev does

not know what to make of Katarin's behavior. Although she has become a much sweeter person, she is not even remotely the same person he married nine years ago. Liev is suspicious and secretly thinks that his wife is possessed (although he admits that his theory seems foolish).

Liev Toscenu: AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 16; ML 10; XP 15; *ring of protection +1* (family heirloom).

Liev was born into a Falkovnian military family of good standing, but his "house" was disgraced when Liev's father (a cavalry commander) lost more than half his men and horses fighting one platoon of Darkon soldiers. Liev hoped to live off his father's reputation, but with that destroyed and his family in disfavor, he married the daughter of a rich sage from Lekar. Liev is a red-headed man who dresses in fine attire. He is a bit selfish and still considers himself above the average peasant.

Katarin Toscenu, podling: AL CE (N); AC 8; MV 12; W4; hp 6 (15); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; D 16, C 16, I 17, W 7, Ch 9 (16 since transformation); ML special; XP 270; dagger. Spells: *burning hands, magic missile, sleep; fog cloud, improved phantasmal force.*

Katarin is a beautiful woman with raven-black hair, cold blue eyes, and a mocking smile. Although noted for her vile temper and vehement dislike for other women, Katarin has changed since becoming a podling. She is neither cold nor hateful and has become, to everyone's disbelief, quite friendly and flirtatious. Katarin has just begun to show the signs of physical deterioration caused by the doppleganger plant's feeding.

Katarin keeps the following in a locked chest in her bedroom: three scrolls (*invisibility, mirror image,* and *wizard lock*, cast at 4th level of ability) and her spell book. Contained within the tome are the following spells: *burning hands, change self, charm person, chill touch, detect magic, feather fall, light, magic missile, sleep, spider climb, unseen servant, ventriloquism; ESP, fog cloud, improved phantasmal force, knock, levitate, magic mouth, scare, strength,* and *wizard lock.* Anyone opening the book triggers the *magic mouth* on the cover that says "Thief! If you so much as read a single line, you will be vaporized! Set me down this instant!" The volume is not otherwise trapped.

Katarin has a pair of al-mi'raj that she keeps locked in a cage. The vicious-tempered beasts strike out at anyone foolish enough to unlock their cage door. The Toscenus also keep a pair of riding horses in the stable.

Al-mi'raj (2): INT animal; AL CN; AC 6; MV 18; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD *teleportation,* immunity to poison; MR 25%; SZ S; ML 7 (caged), 17 (if freed); XP 65; MC14. The al-mi'raj are particularly hostile toward Katarin, for they can sense her evil transformation.

Riding horses (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1-2; SZ L; ML 6; MC1 (Horse). These horses can sense podlings and become very excitable in their presence.

P. Vacant House. This neglected stone house is completely overgrown with creepers and poison ivy. Even though it's been abandoned, this eerie abode is fairly intact. A few roof slates are missing, allowing rain to gather in small puddles on the stone floor, but otherwise the interior is protected from the harsh elements. The fireplace is overgrown with weeds and vines, and a cord of rotten wood lies against a nearby wall. A wooden crib, table, and cot are the only remaining furniture. The front door is clawed and scratched.

This house is owned by Yuri Karloff, the burgomaster (see "Rook Hill Manor"). No one has lived here for 10 years. The last family that lived here (the Grubsteins) was taken away in the night by Vistani gypsies and never seen again. PCs wishing to rent or buy this old house will be referred to the burgomaster (although he does not truly care who resides within).

If the PCs crave combat, this house can be transformed into the lair of six large spiders. The spiders' webs are strung from wall to wall, ceiling to floor. Stuck to the webs are the blood-drained husks of several rats, bats, and other rodents.

Large spiders (6): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 7, 6, 5 (×2), 4 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poisonous bite (Type A, Dmg 15/0, +2 to saving throw); SZ S; ML 7; XP 175; MC1 (Spider).

Q. Wichtenstein Residence. This handsome wooden structure is home to Ferenc Wichtenstein (a craftsman), his wife Gretel, and his daughters Leila and Lotta. Although the sisters once bore a striking resemblance to one another, Lotta has changed substantially since becoming a podling. The sinister "illness" that has overcome the girl has wasted her away to virtually nothing and has reduced her to a trembling doll. With Lotta's impending death, the once-proud family is on the verge of falling apart.

Ferenc Wichtenstein: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, C 16; ML 9; XP 15; shovel (in shed), light crossbow with nine bolts.

Ferenc is a hulking man with a thick black beard and eyes like coals. Despite his imposing physique, he is a gentle man who is having difficulty coping with his daughter's condition. Attempts to gain assistance from the local clergy have failed (see area B), and Ferenc has grown agitated and desperate.

He thinks that his daughter's suffering is somehow the fault of "that decrepit, insane old wizard." He is referring to Mad Rupert (area H), but Rupert is not to blame for Lotta's misfortune (he's not even a wizard).

Gretel Wichtenstein: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 7; XP 7; knife (in kitchen).

Gretel is a selfless, timid woman who values family and tradition above all else. Her younger daughter's illness has made her feel helpless and weak. She spends every waking moment praying for her daughter's health, knowing that it will take more than prayers to save the girl.

Leila Wichtenstein: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 7; XP 15.

Leila is a slim and dreamy 17-year-old girl more concerned with her own appearance than her chores. She is madly in love with young Peter Zagorovich (area L) but expects him to work harder to earn her appreciation. Lately, Leila has put aside her own selfish concerns to tend her dying sister, whom she both fears and pities.

Lotta Wichtenstein, podling: AL CE (LG); AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 1 (3); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg eye gouge for 1-4 hp; ML special; XP 15.

Lotta is but a shell of her former self. Her skin is drawn tightly over her bones, and most of her insides have

been devoured by the doppleganger plant. Not wanting such a weak podling, the parent plant ordered Lotta to attack her family. After a lengthy and destructive frenzy, Lotta was tied to her bed with rope. She has been screaming, trembling, and trying to break free ever since. Lotta has only one day to live at best, and she will use her remaining strength to attack anyone who frees her.

The Wichtensteins keep a **draft horse** (hp 16; see area A for complete statistics) locked in the stable. They also have a pair of **hunting dogs** (see area I for statistics) that sleep in the stables at night. All three animals become visibly agitated in the company of podlings, and the dogs are particularly good at sniffing out podlings.

Rook Hill Manor

This foreboding, three-story stone structure looms above the rest of the community, its grim walls concealed by sprawling ivy and the surrounding trees. Attached to the stone manor is a wooden stable, while a stone parapet circles the roof. The most noticeable feature of the structure, however, is the large jagged hole in the shingled roof.

The manor was built more than eight decades ago by ancestors of the current burgomaster, Yuri Karloff. The Karloffs were not aristocrats by birth but wizards who earned their hoard helping Lord Drakov in his campaign against the neighboring domain of Darkon. Almost all members of the Karloff bloodline are dead, slain by their own magic or murdered by their fellow mages. Only Yuri Karloff, who inherited everything by backstabbing his remaining relatives, survived to continue the legacy (Lord Drakov, who found all this amusing, allowed Yuri to retain his holdings).

The comet's radiation has rendered Yuri completely insane (see area 14), but he still resides in the manor—a skulking, psychotic, and sleepless lunatic. He is joined by three juju zombies—the remains of the Karloff servants.

The true fate of the family servants is a secret known to few living individuals. Twenty-six years ago, four servants (the butler, maid, and two cooks) conspired to murder the Karloffs. The family was headed by Yuri's tyrannical Uncle Anton at the time. The servants, poorly rewarded for years of faithful service, intended to divide the Karloff estate between them after poisoning a family banquet. Unfortunately, Anton's familiar overheard their scheming, and the servants were slain by a *wand of energy draining* (which was later exhausted of all charges) and raised as juju zombies.

One of the zombie-cooks went berserk and had to be destroyed, but the remaining zombies have been loyal ever since. These zombies, now under Yuri's command, are typically found in areas 7, 9, and 12 (see those areas for details). *Oil of timelessness* has been used to protect the zombies from the ravages of decay. Although they seem alive at first glance, they are only blank-faced mockeries of their former selves. PCs discovering the truth about the servants must make a horror check at +2.

All ceilings in the manor are 15′ high; all doors have 35 hp.

Level One

1. Stable. This wooden stable is overgrown with creepers. The odor of rotting hay lingers within the structure, and clumps of the stuff can be seen in the stalls. A handsome carriage adorned with the Karloff family crest (a roaring lion) rests in the 20′ × 20′ open area. A pair of brass lanterns (no fuel, worth 15 gp each) dangle from the front of the carriage. Hidden inside the carriage, tucked beneath one of the seats, is the dirtied shovel used by Yuri to bury the comet in the woods.

Yuri Karloff is a hermit, seldom venturing from the confines of his gloomy manor. The carriage has not been used in years, and the horses that once pulled it wandered off a long time ago.

2. Guest Quarters. Eight wood-framed beds line the walls of this damp, cold chamber. The beds are fitted with straw-filled mattresses, now begun to rot. The walls are adorned with four musty tapestries (two on the north wall, and one each on the west and south walls). A lonely, blackened fireplace is built into the south wall, and above the mantle hangs a shield bearing the Karloff crest. The shield is nonmagical.

The room can be illuminated by lanterns, three of which hang from the ceiling by iron chains. The lanterns each contain enough oil to burn for 1-4 hours.

3. Secret Cellar. Dangling from the webs strung across the ceiling of this dark and musty cellar is a large spider that has starved to death. Wooden wine racks line the western wall, and contained within the racks are 45 bottles of wine (various vintages). In the middle of the room stands a 5′-tall copper vat that the Karloffs used to ferment their own wines. The vat's lid is locked shut but can be opened from the outside. The vat is currently empty.

Against the north wall rest four locked wooden trunks. The keys for the trunks are fairly small and are hidden in an empty wine bottle in the racks (10% chance to find keys per turn of searching). None of the trunks are trapped, and they contain the following:

Trunk #1 (3′ × 2′ × 1′): three folded white gowns, a green cape with gold embroidery (75 gp), two musty brown cloaks, three pairs of slippers, a pair of leather boots, and a pair of white gloves.

Trunk #2 (3′ × 1½′ × 1½′): a drum with two wooden drumsticks, a stuffed cat, an unlocked coffer containing 25 pieces of parchment and six quills, three bottles of ink (5 gp each), a vial containing *oil of slipperiness* (three applications), four Karloff family portraits with wooden frames, and a copper urn (6 gp) containing the ashes of Tamara Karloff, Yuri's aunt.

Trunk #3 (2′ × 2′ × 2′): an empty ceramic jug, three flasks of lantern oil, a wooden box containing five smoking pipes, 12 soap bars, three wooden owl statuettes, a tinderbox, two candelabra, 16 wax candles, eight spools of yarn (dark colors), a jar of bones, a fake crystal ball wrapped in a satin cloth, a wooden wolf mask, and three books. The books are *The Lady and the Vamp, 101 Damnations,* and *Creeping Beauty.* All are charming children's tales.

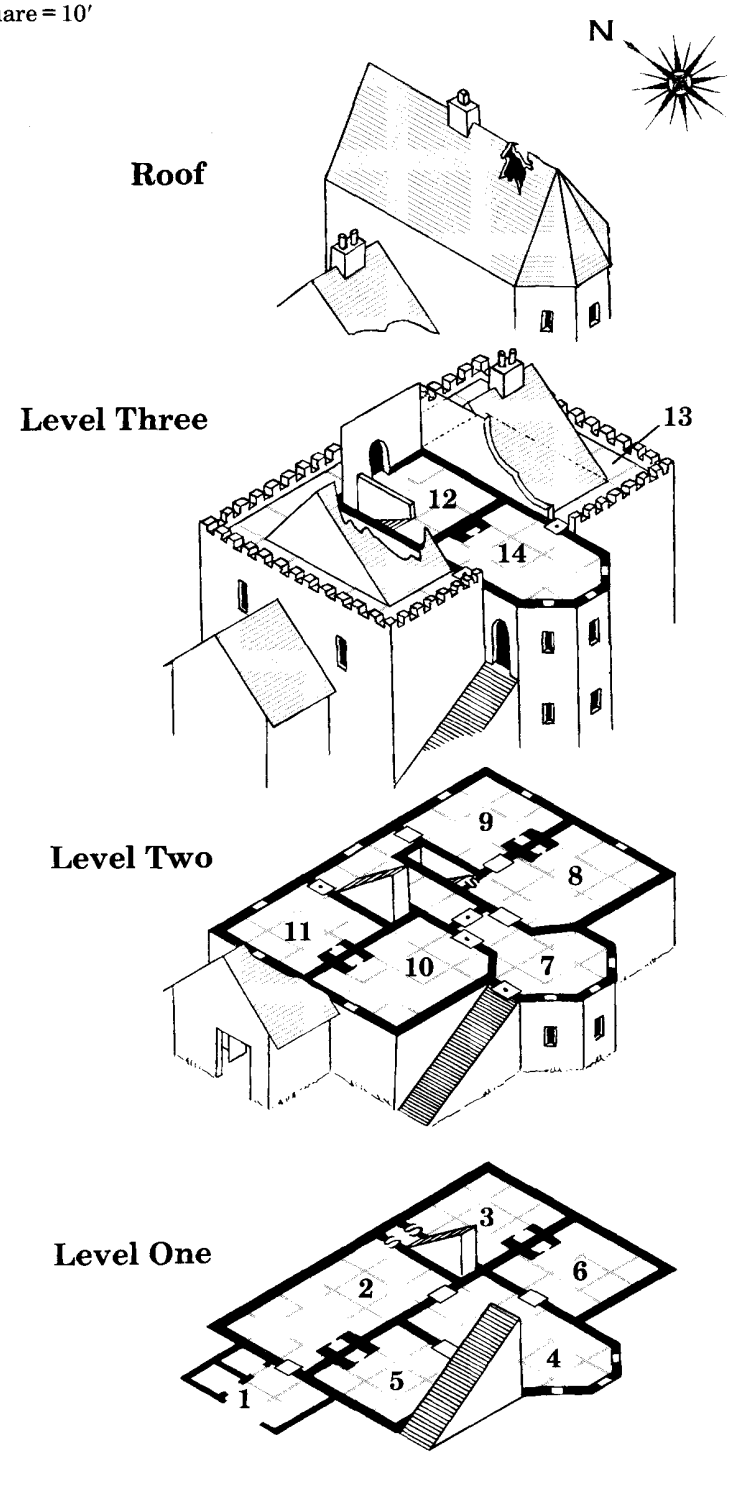
Trunk #4 (2½′ × 1½′ × 2′): a starving **executioner's hood** (INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 6; HD 4 + 4; hp 20; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA suffocate for 1-4 hp per round, −2 to opponent's surprise rolls; SD immune to *sleep* spells; SZ S; ML 15; XP 650; MM2/64).

The hood leaps out at anyone opening the trunk. Once the hood envelops the head of its victim, all attacks directed at the hood affect the victim as well. Air-holes in the back of the trunk enable the creature to breathe while confined.

4. Servants' Dining Room. A long wooden table surrounded by eight handsome chairs dominates the middle of

Rook Hill Manor

1 square = 10′



this long dark chamber. An unlit iron chandelier hangs from the ceiling above the table, suspended from a rope that is tied off to a hook on the western wall. The servants and any guests residing in area 2 typically ate here, not upstairs with the Karloff family (the Karloffs were not noted for their hospitality). The table is currently bare, and the room is unoccupied.

5. Servant Quarters. When they were alive, the Karloff servants slept in this dark and musty bedchamber. Now, it is unoccupied. The blackened fireplace has been cold for years, and the four wooden beds are strung with webs and covered with rotted mattresses. At the foot of each bed is an unlocked 2′ × 1′ × 1′ wooden chest containing simple, dusty clothes. Hidden amidst the clothes in one chest is a potion of *sweet water* and a vial of Type J poison (death in 1-4 minutes unless a save is successful; four doses). The servants had planned to poison a Karloff family banquet but were slain before their scheme could be perpetrated.

6. Kitchen. This dark and neglected kitchen was used to prepare meals for guests staying in area 2. Damp torches still rest snugly in iron brackets along the walls, and sour food odors have engrained themselves in the wooden tables placed about the room. A copper cauldron dangles from a hook inside the sooty fireplace, while an array of wooden forks and spoons hang above the mantle.

The tables are littered with dishes, wooden bowls, baskets, utensils, and rotten foodstuffs, but there is very little worth salvaging. Four hooks with chains, once used to hang meat for drying and smoking, dangle ominously from the ceiling about 7′ above the floor.

Level Two

7. Parlor. PCs climbing the staircase to the main entrance will see the words "Visitors Unwelcome" carved into the door. Yuri Karloff, stricken with madness, used his dagger to chisel this warning to unwanted guests. The door is locked but not trapped. The lock may be picked normally by a thief.

The chamber beyond is octagonal and dark. Standing in the darkness, armed with a heavy crossbow, is Yuri Karloff's juju zombie butler. The butler has in-

structions to kill or drive away anyone other than Yuri entering this area.

Juju zombie (butler): INT low; AL N(E); AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+12; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12 or by weapon; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; half damage from blunt and piercing weapons, and fire-based attacks; impervious to poison, cold and electricity; MR immune to *magic missiles,* mind-affecting spells, death magic, and illusions; SZ M; ML special; XP 975; MC1 (zombie). This zombie is turned as a spectre and can climb walls with a 92% chance of success.

The juju zombie's crossbow is loaded with a *bolt* +2. Once the weapon is discharged, the zombie tosses it aside in favor of raking intruders with its claws. It may also arm itself with any of the weapons located in the room (see below).

Hanging from the ceiling is a large iron chandelier adorned with sharp spikes. If any PCs dare stand under the chandelier, the zombie will seize an edged weapon (either a sword or halberd) and cut the rope that suspends the chandelier. Anyone caught under the falling chandelier suffers 2-12 hp damage (a successful Dexterity check negates damage).

The chamber contains a large padded sofa and two leather armchairs, all of which face inward. A squat, octagonal table rests upon a bearskin rug (150 gp) between the heavy furniture. Other furnishings and adornments include the following:

- Resting atop the center table, a silver-inlaid ebony chessboard with 32 wooden playing pieces (100 gp for the set).
- A suit of black plate armor standing against the east wall. The suit is welded at the joints and is not usable. The empty knight clutches a nonmagical footman's flail.
- Three stuffed giant bats hanging from the ceiling by wires. The bats dangle at the south end of the room, near the windows.
- Four black braziers (actually silver, painted black, worth 75 gp each) standing in the corners. The braziers smell of burned incense.
- Two nonmagical shields hanging on the walls that flank the north alcove. Crossing each shield are two bastard swords (four in all). None of the weapons are magical.
- A 3'-high engraved copper cylinder (15 gp) holding two halberds, a partisan, and three silver-tipped spears.
- A small corner table (between the two armchairs) with an old, crusty cake sitting upon it.

Two of the three doors in the north alcove are locked, but only the door to area 10 is trapped. Yuri Karloff, a former thief, has planted a poisoned needle in the lock (Type C, Dmg 25/2-8, onset 2-5 minutes). Thieves may attempt to remove this trap with normal chances of success.

8. Dining Room. Occupying the middle of this elegant room is a large table of black oak. Unlike most dining tables, however, this one is octagonal. It is surrounded by eight high-backed chairs with carved armrests and red satin seat cushions. Suspended above the table is a pentagram-shaped iron chandelier fitted with dozens of candles. Most of the candles have melted into stumps, and the surface of the table is marked by wax droppings.

Hanging on the chamber walls are 10 framed paintings. Adventurers with the artistic ability proficiency may realize that all 10 paintings share a similar style. The paintings, all done by Yuri's accomplished hand, are generally gruesome in subject matter (grim beheadings, thieves hanging from gallows, drooling werewolves) and color (pumpkin orange, swamp green, mauve, and smoke gray). The paintings are worth 1d6×10 gp each, but only to an interested buyer.

The head of a giant boar is mounted on a wooden plaque above the fireplace mantle. The boar's eyes will seem to follow whoever enters the room (courtesy of a *programmed illusion* created by Yuri's uncle). PCs may attempt to disbelieve the illusion with a +4 bonus to their saving throws. The key to the chest in area 10 is hidden inside the boar's mouth.

Three silver urns (25 gp each) sit on the fireplace mantle. The first two contain the ashes of Fyodor Karloff (Yuri's father) and Myra Karloff (Yuri's mother), and the third holds four trapped shadows. Yuri's evil aunt, Tamara, trapped these undead creatures inside the urn using arcane magicks, and Yuri has been warned never to unseal its lid.

Shadows (4): INT low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 23, 17, 16, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SA strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, 90% undetectable in shadowy conditions, unaffected by cold-based attacks; MR special (immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells); SZ M; ML special; XP 650; MC1.

These shadows are particularly vicious, so clerics turn them at −2. They will leave the manor in search of prey 1-2 turns after their release.

9. Kitchen. Four ornate but unlit lanterns dangle from the ceiling of this well-maintained chamber. Spanning the eastern wall is a wooden counter laden with iron pots, ceramic bowls, cooking utensils, and dirty dishware. Near the fireplace sits a wooden washtub, a broom, a rack of fire pokers, and a cauldron.

Three heavy wooden trunks rest against the north wall. The trunks contain the following:

Trunk #1: three sealed flasks of vinegar, three jars of spice, a jar of mustard seeds, a foil-lined coffer filled with tea, two sacks of flour, a sack of wheat grain, and a block of cheese.

Trunk #2: a jar of mushrooms, a sack filled with nuts, a jar of dried apples, a jar of pickles, a basket of 16 eggs, a sack of tubers, a sack of raisins, 15 garlic cloves, eight onions, and two flasks of cooking oil.

Trunk #3: a keg of cheap ale, an empty copper kettle (4 gp), six bars of soap, four empty baskets, a box of stale wheat biscuits, a flask of lantern oil, six rhubarb sticks wrapped in cloth, and a *Murlynd's spoon.*

On guard in this chamber is the **juju zombie cook** (hp 27; complete statistics at area 7). The creature wears a tall chef's hat and a bloodstained apron. Only the flicker of hatred in the zombie's eyes hints at its true state. It may attack with a huge meat cleaver (Dmg 1-6) or, more favorably, its claws. Its instructions are to slay all intruders. It drags those it kills into area 8 and props them in one of the chairs to rot.

If warned of intruders, the zombie hides inside the fireplace, using its climb walls ability to crawl up the chimney.

10. Library. The door to this room is locked and trapped (see area 7 for details). A pair of unlit lanterns dangle from the ceiling by iron chains, while a green carpet adorned with snakelike designs lies upon the cold stone floor. Stretching along the entire south wall are wooden bookcases lined with dusty and forgotten tomes. A wooden desk and chair have been pushed against the

north wall. Hanging on the wall above is a painted portrait of the grim reaper (signed by its morbid creator, Yuri Karloff, and worth 75 gp). A pair of red leather armchairs face the blackened fireplace. Four cherrywood pipes rest on a small table between the armchairs.

This room once served as a sanctuary for Yuri's magic-wielding Uncle Anton, but Yuri himself seldom finds comfort here (unlike most of his relatives, Yuri has no flair for magic and was compelled to live a life of thievery to support himself).

The many books that line the shelves have belonged to the Karloff family for generations, although most were stolen by hired thieves (or Yuri) to begin with. The volumes discuss all manner of curious lore—everything from ghost stories to evil rituals. Although most of the books are nonmagical, each is worth 2-20 gp to an interested buyer (wizards typically fall into this category). There are 197 books altogether.

The only magical tome is a *cursed* book titled *Sergei von Daragor's Tales of Terror* that recounts the explorations of the adventuresome pirate. Von Daragor's ship, the *Harpy's Fury,* eventually met its demise, but somehow Von Daragor's dark memoirs survived. The tales within the book are so bone-chilling and disturbing that anyone who reads the volume must save vs. spells or be stricken with fright. Those who fail their rolls are attacked in 1-4 hours by the equivalent of a *phantasmal killer.* Although the *phantasmal killer* is the work of the reader's imagination, the reader can die from its attack.

The desk drawer contains several quills and sheets of blank parchment. Mingled amidst these sheets is an invoice for six cowhide canvasses (for paintings). Yuri Karloff's signature has been scrawled across the bottom of the form. There is also an order form for three wooden picture frames that reads: "I, Yuri Karloff, hereby convey five gold pieces to Gyorgi Zagorovich as payment for three wooden picture frames of finest quality and craftsmanship." Yuri's signature also marks this page.

Tucked underneath the desk is a locked wooden chest. The key is hidden in the boar's mouth in area 8. Opening the chest without the proper key triggers a trap. A small glass tube inside the chest shatters, releasing a 5′ × 5′ × 5′ cloud of green vapor. The vapor cloud lasts only one round but dissolves flesh for 2-12 hp damage (half if a saving throw vs. breath weapon is successful). The cloud has no adverse effects on equipment or inorganic matter. If the trap is successfully disarmed, the glass tube may be removed and used as a grenade. It is very delicate, however, and must be handled with extreme care.

The wooden chest contains a deed to the Rook Hill estate (asserting Yuri as the rightful heir to his uncle's manor), a scroll of *protection from lycanthropes,* and a crescent-shaped brooch made of silver inlaid with moonstone (175 gp).

The brooch is a special talisman recognized by Vistani gypsies as a sign of trust and friendship. Anyone wearing this talisman in the presence of the Vistani will generate a friendly or indifferent response (see the Encounter Reactions table on page 103 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Darklings, the gypsy outcasts described in the *Monstrous Compendium*'s RAVENLOFT appendix, automatically regard the possessor of the brooch with extreme hate and intolerance.

11. Yuri's Bedchamber. The door to this chamber is locked and trapped. If the door is opened more than halfway, a mannequin made of canvas stuffed with dried leaves swings down from the ceiling and strikes any PC standing in the doorway (THAC0 11). It is held to the ceiling by hooks and suspended by a 10′ rope. The mannequin is weighted with five 10-lb. metal spheres, and any PC struck by the dummy sustains 1-8 hp damage. Once the trap has been triggered, the mannequin dangles limply by its neck in the doorway. Thieves outside the room may attempt to find and remove this trap with a −40% penalty.

Yuri's bedroom is unlit and cold. An empty fireplace is set into the south wall, while Yuri's unmade four-poster bed rests against the west wall. Above the bed hangs a portrait of a diabolical gentlemen dressed in black attire with his lips pursed tightly together (this flattering depiction of Yuri's uncle can be sold for 35 gp). Above the fireplace hangs one of Yuri's own paintings: a vampiric mist choking the life out of a gaunt, panic-stricken peasant (worth 50 gp to an interested buyer).

In the southeast corner of the room stands the splintered remnants of a wooden screen destroyed by Yuri during a fit of insane agression. Behind the screen is an opened trunk stuffed with clothes. Amidst the clothes is a human-sized suit of leather armor and a bottle of Type M contact poison (onset time 1-4 minutes, Dmg 20/5, eight doses). The label on the bottle reads Borcan Brim-bubbly Wine.

Under the north window sits a large padded sofa flanked by a pair of squat rectangular tables. On one table rest three ebony cat statuettes (3 gp each).

Level Three

12. Gallery. A staircase from the level below ascends into this dark chamber. Silently perched on the 3′-high stone wall between the stairs and the northern door is a juju zombie, waiting to attack anyone entering the room (per Yuri's instructions).

Juju zombie (maid): hp 22; see area 7 for complete statistics. This zombie's hands have been coated with Type M contact poison (see area 11). The zombie wears an intricate silver bodice pin (90 gp), a tattered maid's uniform, and a white bonnet. Attached to her belt is a feather duster and a ring of keys to all of the manor's locked doors.

This chamber is bare except for seven framed paintings hanging on the eastern and southern walls. The paintings are gruesome but well done; each is approximately 3′ × 2′ and worth 10-60 (1d6 × 10) gp intact. They are described here in case the PCs show a morbid interest in Yuri's grim handiwork.

Painting #1: Titled *False Face,* this portrait depicts a handsome groom tearing the face off his unsuspecting bride.

Painting #2: This untitled painting shows a man with no eyes stumbling through a forest of twisted, laughing trees.

Painting #3: Another untitled work, this painting depicts a fanged mouth with crimson lips set against a black background. Hidden behind this painting is a wizard's scroll with the spells *mending, wizard mark,* and *fog cloud* written on it (at 8th level of ability).

Painting #4: This painting depicts an angry hag trying to tear free a vampire bat caught in her hair; this bizarre piece is jovially titled *Bat's Entertainment.*

Painting #5: Titled *Santa Claws,* this hideous painting depicts a scarlet-garbed werewolf walking through a burned-out ruin with a sack of limbs slung over one shoulder.

Painting #6: In this piece titled *Crow's*

Feast, a severed human head has been mounted on a scarecrow's shoulders and left in a field of black grain.

Painting #7: This untitled painting depicts a ballroom full of dancing couples; most of the couples are attached to puppet strings, while a few couples have collapsed into piles on the tiled floor, their strings cut.

13. Roof Parapet. This walkway circles the perimeter of the manor and remains exposed to the temperamental weather. A 3'-high crenelated wall surrounds the walkway, 30' above ground level (falling damage is 3d6 hp). The door leading into area 14 is locked but not trapped. The lock may be opened by a thief with normal chances of success. Of course, anyone fooling with the lock will alert Yuri in area 14. His reaction to intruders will be less than favorable.

14. Workroom. This large, cluttered room is illuminated by whatever light seeps in through the windows and the gaping hole in the ceiling 30' above. Pieces of the roof are strewn about the floor, while the room's furnishings are draped in dusty white shrouds. These furnishings include two worn sofas, a leather armchair, a cedar trunk (contents detailed below), a 4'-tall hourglass in a wooden frame, three tables, and an easel. Once used as a wizardly workroom by Yuri's uncle Anton, this room has since been transformed into the burgomaster's private studio. Here he creates his gruesome paintings. Several paintings, most of them unfinished and partially devoured (see below), are stacked against the north wall near the blackened fireplace.

Yuri Karloff lurks in the dark shadows of this room. The radiation from the comet has turned him into a paranoid lunatic. He has been unable to sleep for days and has sustained himself by eating his own paintings (regular food disgusts him). His eyes have turned a swampy green color, and he has lost all his hair. These radiation symptoms, coupled with his own paranoid delusions, have slowly shredded away Yuri's sanity.

Yuri Karloff: AL CN (insane); AC 7; MV 12; T8; hp 41; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 17, C 15; ML 11; XP 2,000; thief skills: PP 75%, OL 67%, FT 55%, MS 77%, HS 59% (95% with *essence of darkness* potion), HN 25%, CW 95%, RL 40%; *ring of mind shielding*, potion of *spider climbing* (single dose, as the second-level wizard's spell), *essence of darkness* potion (two doses remaining, see *Complete Thief's Handbook*, page 104, for details); dagger coated with Type M contact poison; hand crossbow with nine poison-coated bolts (Type D injected, onset time 1-2 minutes, Dmg 30/2-12); bag of caltrops; keys to all locked doors and the cedar chest described below.

Yuri's *ring of mind shielding* is special. Not only does it protect him from *ESP, detect lie,* and *know alignment* spells, but it also protects his mind from psionic intrusion (as per Tower of Iron Will), *charm*-related spells (including *command, hold person, hypnotism,* and *suggestion),* and the mind bondage power of the doppleganger plant.

Yuri has already doused his clothes in *essence of darkness,* turning them pitch black. If alerted to intruders, he drinks another dose of the potion, turns himself black, and hides in shadows atop the fireplace. If the PCs spot him, he spills his caltrops onto the floor to slow down PC fighters and uses his hand crossbow to pick off targets in the door-

way. If faced with overwhelming opposition, he scuttles up to the hole in the ceiling (with the assistance of his potion of *spider climbing*), then climbs out onto the roof to pick off anyone standing on the parapet (area 13). As a last resort, he hurls his *essence of darkness* potion at the party (the "darkness bomb" has the same effect and duration as a *darkness 15' radius* spell) and flees toward the village (he must make a successful climb-walls roll to descend the manor's outside wall).

Yuri ignores all attempts to parley unless the PCs specifically mention the "falling star." If asked about the comet, Yuri giggles hopelessly and claims to have hidden it. If questioned about the comet's location, Yuri says he hid it "somewhere safe" (he will not be more specific, and his *ring of mind shielding* protects him from *ESP* and other mind-probing spells).

To discover the comet's location, the PCs must somehow remove Yuri's ring and cast an *ESP, charm person,* or similar spell on him. Information gleaned from the burgomaster in this fashion is vague and misleading at best; the phrase "in the woods . . . behind the house" provides his only clue to the comet's true whereabouts. If Yuri is slain, a *speak with dead* spell may also suggest the location of the fallen star. Yuri's spirit speaks evasively, uttering phrases such as "Ask the trees. The trees know." or "The seed—it grows in the earth!"

If the shroud covering the easel is removed, the PCs will see Yuri's latest (and probably last) piece of artwork: a huge, sprawling plant with tangled vines and pods the size of coffins. If the PCs have not yet unveiled the true evil at work in Delmunster, this creepy clue should prove quite revealing. Yuri himself has never seen the doppleganger plant and cannot explain what inspired him to create this picture. However, he has already titled it *Horror's Harvest* and laughs nervously when asked about it. The background scenery depicts a forest—a clue to the doppleganger plant's location (the DM should mention this only if the PCs study the picture closely). The artistic skill of this piece hardly compares with his other displayed works; it is worth 5 gp.

Only a *heal* spell can cure Yuri of his insanity; spells such as *remove curse, cure disease,* and *neutralize poison* have no effect.

The shrouded tables are cluttered with alchemical equipment employed by Yuri's ancestors. Yuri occasionally uses the equipment to make poisons and dyes but otherwise has no use for the stuff. PCs rummaging through the contents will find beakers, bottles, candles, flasks, funnels, jars, ladles, pans, phials, retorts, tongs, piping tubes, and scroll tubes.

The cedar chest is locked and trapped. Although the lock may be picked by a thief with normal chances of success, opening the chest without the proper key releases three spring-loaded darts (THAC0 15, Dmg 1-3, each coated with Type C poison). The darts fire in an upward arc and cannot hit PCs standing behind the chest. Inside the chest are 15 jars of paint (all gloomy colors) and several loose spell components (for 2-12 random 1st- and 2nd-level wizard spells).

One of the shroud-covered sofas in the chamber has a hole burned through it from the comet that plunged through the ceiling. PCs carefully searching the floor underneath the sofa will find some ashes, comet dust, and drops of hardened ooze (harmless). PCs searching the rest of the floor will also find several broken shingles from the damaged roof.

Comet Site

About two miles north of the burgomaster's manor, in the forest behind Rook Hill, lurks the horrible doppleganger plant. The woods within 200' of the plant are deathly silent, as the plant's presence has driven away the typical forest denizens. The plant, although quickly identifiable by its sheer expanse and its great pods, is concealed in a thick copse of trees, brush, and wild pumpkin patches.

Even with the information obtained from Yuri Karloff, locating the comet will be a difficult task, especially for PCs who are unfamiliar with the woods. Podlings have done their best to erase any tracks that may lead to the parent plant, leaving few clues for the party to follow. Podling villagers could offer themselves as guides, only to lead the party in the wrong direction (perhaps to a false comet site prepared by the podlings for this contingency).

Doppleganger plant: INT genius; AL CE; AC 10 (vines)/6 (pods); MV nil; HD 16; hp see below; THAC0 nil; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA mind bondage; SD half damage from fire- and lightning-based attacks, weapons used against vines inflict only 1 hp damage; SZ G (120' wide); ML 18; XP 16,000; MC10.

Experience for the doppleganger plant should be awarded only if the entire plant is destroyed (vines, leaves, and pods). The plant has 16 pods, each with 6 hp. The vines and leaves have 24 hp total.

Scattered throughout the plant's tangled vines and leaves are 16 pods, each measuring between 4' and 6' long. These pods are the source of the creature's intelligence and its ability to dominate the minds of others.

The parent plant cannot communicate with those it does not control, but is able to instantly exchange information and instructions with its podlings (those beings it has taken over). The parent plant is unable to attack or defend itself except with its mind bondage power. Thus, in physical combat, it relies on its podlings to fight for it. Destruction of the vines and leaves does not kill the plant, but gives it the appearance of being slain. Likewise, destruction of the pods without the elimination of the vines and leaves will not kill the plant.

Once each round, the parent plant can attempt to use its mind bondage power on any sleeping or unconscious creature within a 16-miles radius. Only one new podling may be obtained each 24 hours. Victims of the mind bondage attack are entitled to a saving throw vs. spells to avoid its affects. Success indicates that they have escaped the plant's influence but are aware that something evil has just tried to attack their minds (elves and half-elves are resistant to this power as though it was a *charm* spell).

The life force of a podling is drawn into one of the plant's pods, where it remains until that pod is destroyed. A doppleganger plant can have only as many podlings as it has pods. When a podling dies, the plant devours the podling's life force so that a new life force may be contained within the pod. If a pod is destroyed, the soul trapped within is released and will attempt to return to its body. This can be done only if the body has not been slain. Successful return to the body requires a resurrection survival check and leaves the victim dazed and helpless for one hour.

Doppleganger plants survive by drawing away the vital essences of their podlings; they require no other sustenance. Starting 24 hours after it has been enslaved, a podling begins to waste away. It loses 1-4 hp each day as

the parent plant feeds on its life essence. These points cannot be regained through natural or magical means (except with a *heal* spell) until the parent plant is dead. This wasting occurs at the center of the body and gradually works its way outward as all manner of tissues, bones, and body fluids are consumed. When the podling finally dies from the feeding of the parent plant, it is nothing more than a hollow shell of flesh with some muscle tissue and subcutaneous fat.

Although podlings are mentally dominated by the plants they serve, their actions are in no way stiff or unnatural. Casual observers will notice nothing odd about the podlings.

A podling retains all knowledge and abilities it had in its previous existence, but now serves the needs of the doppleganger plant exclusively. It is no longer alive in the sense it once was. Any basic medical check will reveal no respiration (except as needed to speak or smell), no heart beat, and no response of the pupils to light. Similarly, podlings have no need or desire to eat, drink, or sleep. It is through these differences that podlings are most often discovered.

Podlings take normal damage from weapons. Anyone using a slashing or piercing weapon to fight a podling has a 5% chance per hit inflicted of noticing that there is something unusual about the creature. There is a 10% chance per hit point of damage inflicted on subsequent rounds of discovering that the podling is partially hollowed out. If the attacker has no reason to suspect that this is the case, he must make a horror check as soon as the truth about the creature is uncovered (horror checks are described in the RAVENLOFT rules book, pages 22-24). Any examination of a podling killed by such weapons will instantly reveal its true nature.

When called upon to defend the parent plant, the podling draws upon all the knowledge and power it had prior to its transformation (such as spells, special abilities, familiarity with its enemies' weaknesses and capabilities) to defeat the enemies of the plant. The actual statistics for podlings are listed with the NPCs for each area in the village.

Because the doppleganger plant has no direct defense against attacking PCs, it must call upon its podlings to defend it. If the plant senses the approach of intruders, or if one of its podlings discovers

the party's intentions, the parent plant will command all of its podlings to attack the party. Podlings that have infiltrated the party (this includes PC podlings) will suddenly turn on the PCs. However, the podlings do not attack like mindless automatons; they silently communicate with each other and the parent plant at all times, making them far more devious and well coordinated than the PCs realize. They may postpone a direct attack until the party becomes divided, or they may try to lead the party astray (perhaps into an ambush). Remember, they have genius intelligence.

At the core of the doppleganger plant, hidden in a vine-covered crater about 5' wide, is the comet. The comet has split in two, allowing the seed within to germinate into the horrible creature that now plagues the town. The comet cannot be reached until the doppleganger plant's vines are cut away. PCs with infravision will see an unfamiliar disturbance emanating from the comet (peculiar heat-emitting radiation bands), and those coming in contact with the comet fragments must make a saving throw vs. petrification or be irradiated.

Clothing and leather will not protect PCs from the radiation, although spells such as *Otiluke's resilient sphere* and *wall of force* will block or contain the radiation. Metal gauntlets will allow a PC to hold the comet fragments for 2-12 rounds without being irradiated.

Although the radiation itself is not far reaching (most of it was absorbed by the doppleganger plant), its effects are far from benign. When a PC is irradiated, he develops 1-4 radiation symptoms (determined randomly using the "Radiation Effects" table). The first symptom appears in 1-12 turns; additional symptoms appear every 2d12 + 12 turns. These symptoms persist until the PC is *healed* (as per the 6th-level priest's spell). Spells such as *cure disease, neutralize poison,* and *remove curse* have no effect.

If the doppleganger plant loses half its pods or all its vines, it will allow the party to take the comet and depart safely (using one of its podlings to communicate this to the PCs). The doppleganger plant does not depend on the comet for sustenance, so removing the comet from the plant's core has no adverse effect on the creature itself. PCs of good alignment, however, cannot allow such an evil creature to continue feed-

Radiation Effects

Roll d100	Effect*
01-07	Victim cannot stand daylight and suffers 1-4 hp burn damage each round he remains exposed to direct sunlight.
08-12	Victim begins to waste away, losing one Strength point and 5% of his weight each day until the victim dies or is *healed*. *Healed* victims regain all lost Strength; weight returns at the same rate it was lost.
13-19	Victim glows in the dark (a white aura illuminating a 5' radius); a *darkness* spell will blot out this aura for as long as the spell persists.
20-26	Victim's skin turns a different color permanently (roll 1d4): 1) ochre yellow, 2) olive green, 3) illithid mauve, 4) pitch black.
27-31	Victim's skin blisters, inflicting no damage but preventing the victim from wearing armor or tight clothing (including gloves and shoes). Victim's Charisma drops 1-4 points when blisters are exposed. All attack rolls are made at −1.
32-38	One of the victim's limbs withers and falls off (typically the appendage directly exposed to the radiation). The victim loses 10% of his or her hit points permanently.
39-42	A third eye appears somewhere on the victim's body (such as the back of the head or palm of the hand). The victim can see through this eye normally.
43-47	Victim falls into a coma for 5d6 days and cannot be awakened except with a *heal* spell.
48-52**	Victim's eyes change color permanently (roll 1d4): 1) blood red, 2) feral yellow, 3) blank white, 4) swampy green.
53-58	Victim's voice becomes raspy (50%), or victim loses voice completely (50%). A spell-caster who loses his voice cannot cast spells with verbal components unless he first casts a *vocalize* spell.
59-62	Victim is perpetually twitchy, suffering a −1 penalty to all attack rolls. Spell-casters have a +30% chance of spell failure when casting spells with somatic components. Rogues suffer a −15% penalty to pick pockets, open locks, and remove traps rolls.
63-69**	Victim's hair turns white permanently (50%) or falls out (50%).
70-73	Cloudy cataracts form in the victim's eyes, rendering the victim completely blind until a *heal* spell is cast (a *cure blindness* spell will not work).
74-77	Victim's skin oozes a viscid, milky-white substance once per day for a duration of 2-12 rounds. The substance is poisonous to all but the victim (Type I ingested) but turns crusty after 1-4 hours (poison becomes less potent, allowing +6 to savings throws).
78-81	Victim corrodes metal by touch (magical items are entitled to saving throws vs. acid to resist the corrosion, with a +1 bonus for every two pluses of enchantment). Metallic artifacts are unaffected.
82-88**	Victim no longer requires sleep and cannot regain lost hit points through rest. Spell-casters may still rememorize spells, *sleep* spells still affect the victim, and rules regarding unconsciousness still apply. Sleep deprivation has a 5% cumulative chance per day of causing insanity (as per a *confusion* spell, with other symptoms as determined by the DM).
89-91	Victim is drained of 1-4 points of Constitution until a *heal* spell is cast (at which time all drained points are immediately restored).
92-95**	Victim is sickened by normal food and must draw sustenance from one of the following (roll 1d4): 1) bones, 2) paper or canvas, 3) soil, 4) wood.
96-00	Nothing adverse occurs (the victim has resisted the radiation's effect).

* A *heal* spell cures the victim of all radiation afflictions. Some radiation effects may require horror checks, at the DM's discretion.
** These are symptoms contracted by Yuri Karloff (see Rook Hill Manor).

ing on the populace of Delmunster; inevitably, the party will be compelled to destroy the thing. If the PCs fail to destroy the entire plant, however, the creature's harvest of horror will undoubtedly begin again in a matter of weeks.

Concluding the Adventure

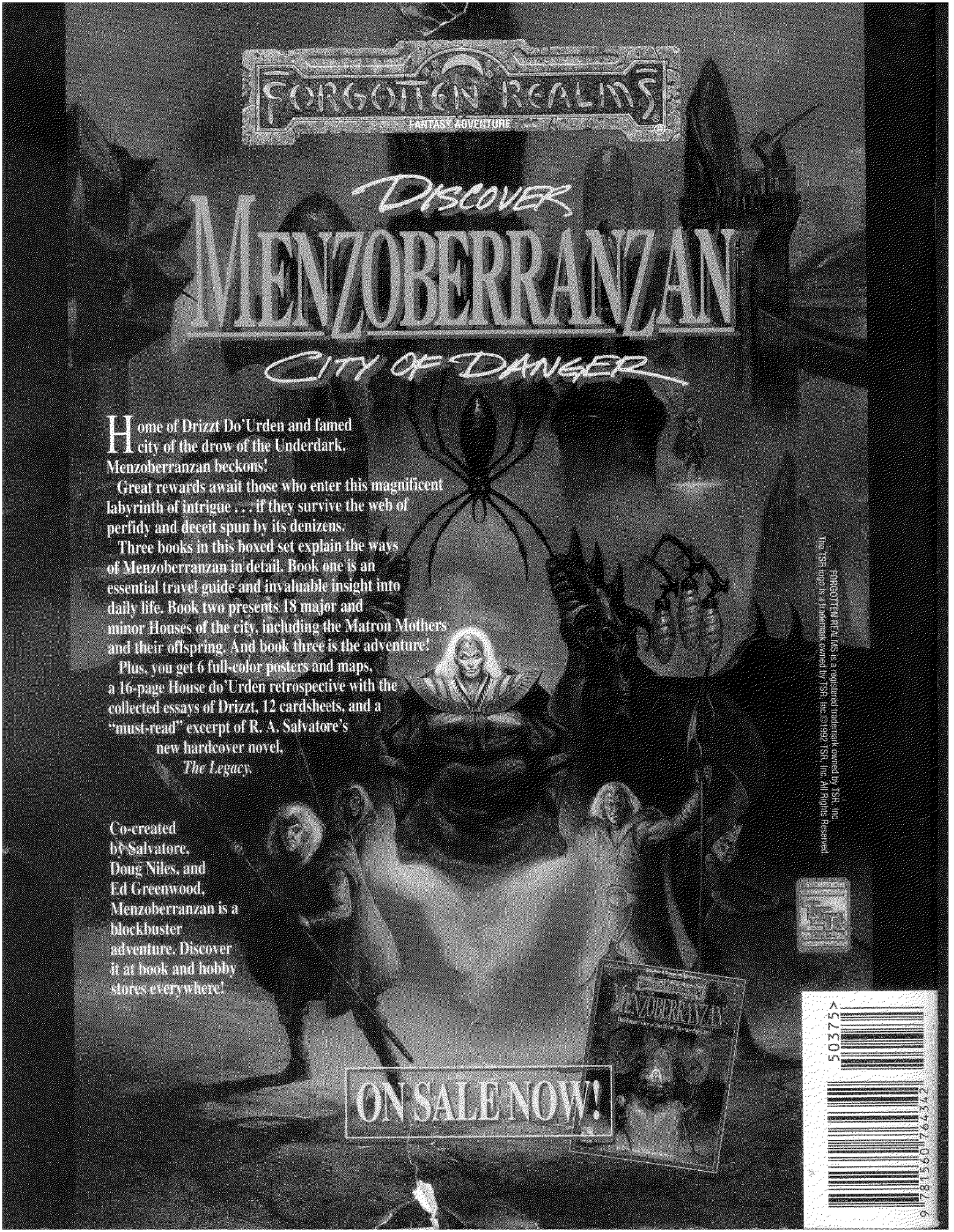
Podlings freed from the mind bondage power of the parent plant suddenly collapse like puppets with their strings cut. The former podlings remain dazed for one hour until they throw off the effects of their imprisonment; after that they begin healing normally. Once the doppleganger plant is destroyed, the PCs can return to Thull Arksum's tower with the comet, much to the relief of the surviving villagers. However, if the shadows from area 8 were unleashed on the village, the PCs will have to rid Delmunster of this undead menace before the villagers become shadows themselves.

The PCs should be awarded full experience points for destroying the doppleganger plant, but killing podlings is another matter entirely. While podlings are technically evil in alignment, they are not necessarily evil by choice. All NPCs in Delmunster are assigned XP awards, but only for their podling forms (PCs should not be murdering NPCs who pose no threat to them). If the PCs manage to free the NPC podlings by killing the parent plant, the party should receive full experience for each NPC who is freed (even evil NPCs). If the PCs are forced to kill NPC podlings, only half the usual experience should be awarded.

If the PCs are successful in their quest, Thull happily gives them the promised reward and begins his studies. But this story of horror will not end happily, not without some dark concerns left hanging like a corpse from the gallows.

Thull Arksum places the comet inside a specially prepared study tank and begins a series of tests on the broken rock. His brow furrows if the PCs mention the doppleganger plant that sprouted from the comet's core. "A crust of rock encasing a seed of evil," Thull replies with grave concern. "I dread to ponder if there are more . . ."

Later, as night falls upon the countryside and the PCs abandon Thull's hospitality, a bright star flashes across the darkening sky. Then another. And another. Ω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